Toil or Sacrifice.

See page 117.

THE

WINNING WORKER;

OR, THE

POSSIBILITIES, DUTY, AND METHODS OF DOING GOOD TO MEN.

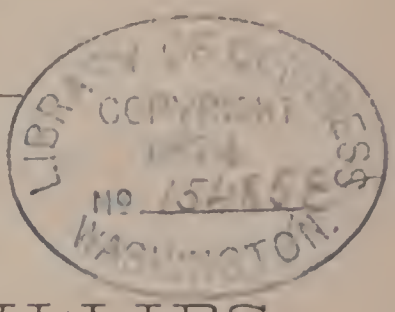
By JAMES PORTER, D.D.,

AUTHOR OF "THE TRUE EVANGELIST," "OPERATIVE'S FRIEND," "REVIVALS OF RELIGION," "CHART OF LIFE," ETC.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION,

BY REV. J. A. M. CHAPMAN, PASTOR OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, NEW YORK.

"As we have opportunity let us do good unto all men."—*Paul.*



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TO

All who Desire to Improve Life

TO THE BEST ADVANTAGE FOR THEMSELVES AND THEIR FELLOW-BEINGS, OF WHATEVER PROFESSION, EMPLOYMENT, OR CONDITION,

ESPECIALLY TO PERSONS OF MODERATE CAPACITY AND MEANS

OF USEFULNESS,

AND WHO SEE LITTLE OPPORTUNITY TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE HAPPINESS OF OTHERS,

This work is affectionately inscribed

BY THE AUTHOR.

INTRODUCTION.

THAT an active, vigorous, aggressive Church is the most important demand of this or any other age, cannot be doubted; and any effort that is calculated to meet this demand, should be welcomed by all earnest workers in the vineyard of the Master. We cannot avoid the conviction that the greatest obstacles to the speedy evangelization of the race lie inside the Church and not outside. In undertaking the salvation of our world, we may well suppose that God foresaw all the possible antagonisms of vice and error, and amply provided for any and every emergency that might arise in the conflict; that he placed at the command of this Church, means equal to the performance of the work com-

mitted to her hands. Why he devolves the work of Christian propagandism upon the disciples of Christ we may not fully understand; but that such is the arrangement under the Gospel economy there can be no question. And having given the broad commission to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, we might have reasonably expected the rapid spread and speedy triumph of Christianity.

Eighteen hundred times the sun has swept his circuit, and yet the Church is comparatively small and feeble; her foes numerous, formidable, and defiant. The situation is remarkable, in view of the provisions that have been made for her success, and her actual triumphs during the periods of her history. What have been the causes that made the centuries of her success the exception rather than the rule? We cannot attribute it to the power and activity of her enemies, for these have been the most formidable during the very periods of her greatest triumph. Is it a lack in the provisions of the Gospel? Certainly not, for a failure in one instance would undermine the whole

system. Want of culture and learning? Most assuredly not, for he who has been to Christ knows enough to lead others to him; while all history proves that it is not men of broadest culture and rarest scholarship that have been the most successful in winning souls to the Master. Where, then, shall we seek it? It lies in nothing else but the lack of personal piety and activity on the part of Christ's pledged disciples. Here is the secret of all the Church's failures during these centuries. She needs more culture, more intellect, more intelligence and wealth; but above all, and more than all, she needs a deeper, warmer, richer baptism of the Holy Ghost, that shall vitalize her dormant energies, and induce her to use the means that are at the command of her faith, and that shall at the same time stimulate to activity *all* her members. For it is a sad fact that the work in most of the Churches is done by the few, and *their* efficiency is crippled by the mass of spiritual inertia with which they are burdened. Let the whole membership come up to the average activity of the few devoted workers, and the efficiency and

influence of the Church will be increased a hundred fold. The work of the apologist is, and will continue to be, in the future as in the past, of great importance in meeting the objections of infidelity. The Church should furnish men that can manfully grapple with her foes in any field or with any weapons they may choose. But, then, God has not predicated the triumph of this Gospel over its enemies upon the logic and learning of apologists, but upon preaching and living Christ by his disciples. The Gospel will triumph over all forms of external opposition with the utmost ease when it can embody itself in an earnest, consecrated Church. Let every true disciple of Christ, of whatever age or condition, leave the retreats of indolence and luxury, of indifference and worldliness, make the world second and subservient, and Christ first, and the Church could laugh to scorn all her foes, put Christianity in the ascendant, and flash the glories of the millennium along the horizon in our day.

The question of pre-eminent importance is, How may the Church be aroused and moved

nearer to God? The pulpit and the pew must rise to the higher altitudes of religious life to escape the accumulating influence of the skepticism that pervades the very atmosphere. There never has been a period when society was permeated with influences so calculated to take the temper out of Gospel weapons as this in which we live. Never one when the Church needed so much faith, so much earnestness, so much of God, to push forward her conquests as now. And in this stirring, thinking, doubting age, only they will be successful in carrying on the aggressive movements of the Gospel whose brains throb with Divine truth, whose hearts glow like furnaces with Divine life, and whose lives scintillate with Divine light and fire.

Whatever aids in moving the Church to this experience is, therefore, the most imperative demand of the times. We welcome, as a valuable contribution to this end, "THE WINNING WORKER," from the pen of Rev. James Porter, D.D. It is the fruit of a long, wide, and varied experience in the different branches of active labor, of careful

observation, and correct thought, during many years, and is eminently worthy of the study of all earnest workers in the Church of Christ. It is written in a plain, direct, forcible style, abounding in happy and pertinent illustrations, seasonable advice, fruitful suggestions, pointing out the various fields and methods of usefulness, and with much power puts the responsibility upon the conscience of the reader. We bid it a hearty God-speed, and most cordially commend it to the prayerful attention of all who desire to be useful in the vineyard of the Master.

J. A. M. CHAPMAN.

ST. PAUL'S PARSONAGE, N. Y.,
November 10, 1874.

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THE

WINNING WORKER.

CHAPTER I.

THE PROPER MISSION OF LIFE.

HUMAN life is a probation involving tremendous possibilities of good and evil, both in this world, and in that which is to come. Dr. Chalmers very justly says: "*Every* man is a missionary now and forever, for good or evil, whether he intends or designs it or not. He may be a *blot*, radiating his dark influence outward to the very circumference of society, or he may be a *blessing*, spreading benediction over all the length and breadth of the world; but a *blank* he cannot be. There are no moral blanks;

there are no *neutral* characters. We are either the sower that sows and corrupts, or the *light* that splendidly illuminates, or the *salt* that silently operates; but being dead or alive, every man *speaks*."

The revealed will of God is our rule of faith and action, showing the destiny for which we were made, and the means of its achievement. It is safe to say, that "he fails of fulfilling the whole end of his being who forgets the present in the hope of the future, or who labors in such a way to prepare for the life to come as to render himself inactive and useless in this."

Future blessedness is only the continuation and perfection of that which begins here. The present is the time to sow; the full harvest will come in the future world. Faithful sowing, however, has its immediate rewards in the consciousness of Divine approval, and in spiritual inspirations and endowments transcending all human explanation. Even "a hundred fold" is promised for every sacrifice made in this service.

Our duties are divisible into two classes, namely:

First, such as relate primarily to God himself; as for example, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me; thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain;" "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," etc. Second, such as relate especially to *men*, forbidding any infringement of their rights, and requiring us to show mercy to them as they may need, and as we may be able. This is clearly indicated by God's remonstrance with his ancient people who had so far apostatized as to call the proud happy, when he said, "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Micah vi, 8.

Those, therefore, who withdraw themselves from society to cultivate piety toward God, flee, like Jonah, from their proper work, and will lose the reward of service rendered to men; while those who neglect love to God, but seek to be honest and honorable toward men from principles of justice and humanity merely, are equally defective. Both may be zealous in their way, but they are one-

sided and ill-balanced, and come short of that symmetrical character required by the Master in order to pass the final ordeal with approval.

Sacrifices, fasts, and spiritual prostrations, however extreme, are an offense to God if unaccompanied with *righteousness* toward men. The old Jews employed them to excess. They bowed down their heads "like a bulrush, and spread sackcloth and ashes under them," to no good effect; when God corrected their folly, by asking them, "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rearward. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou

shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am." Isaiah lviii, 6–9.

These duties are still obligatory, and those religionists who treat them as of little account, show that they are not properly instructed. Their pious efforts will prove a failure both with God and men, especially with intelligent men who need sympathy and do not receive it. *Justice and humanity* must underlie our religion or it will be rejected, however plausible, except by the ignorant and superstitious.

But duty toward men is not limited to temporal interests. While we are feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and sympathizing with all sorrow, we are required to *reform*, educate, and build them up in faith, love, and Christian holiness. Christ came into the world because men "must be born again" in order to see the kingdom of God. He lived, suffered, and died to effect this grand object. The plan he provided for its achievement is to be published, explained, and enforced. This work he committed primarily to his apostles, and secondarily to his followers, who are to "go

into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature," so as to command their acceptance of it, and effect their conversion from sin to holiness. Or, to adopt the direction of the Saviour, we are to let our light *so shine* before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven.

Doing good is, therefore, the proper mission of life. *Not* to God, but to men. He is above want. Hence says St. Paul to the Galatians, "As we have opportunity, let us do good unto *all men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

This duty is limited only by our *ability* and *opportunity*. The obligation is *universal*, irrespective of relations, professions, or circumstances; and commends the temporal, spiritual, and eternal interests of all to our sympathy. And it is gratifying to see that one of the largest Churches of our land seems to comprehend the situation by requiring that its members shall continue to evidence their desire of salvation; First, "By doing no harm," and secondly, by "doing good;" by

being in every kind *merciful* after their power; as they have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort, and as far as possible to all men. To their *bodies*, by giving food to the hungry, by clothing the naked, by visiting or helping them that are sick or in prison. To their *souls*, by instructing, reproving, or exhorting all we have any intercourse with, trampling under foot that enthusiastic doctrine that we are not to do good unless our hearts are free to it."

Still, in the discharge of this duty, some may have a *special* mission to particular individuals or classes. When this is the case, it will be indicated by outward circumstances, by the Spirit of God, or by both. And it is safe to follow the suggestions of both, so long as they do not lead us away from the clear teachings of God's word, and the benevolent spirit it inculcates. We are never to do *evil* that good may come. Assuming, as we should, that where there is ability and opportunity there exists a corresponding *duty*, we may regard ourselves called to make such loyal effort as the needed good may seem to require.

This arrangement was founded in infinite wisdom. It is necessary to the protection and comfort of the *needy*, (and all are needy at times,) but still more for the benefit of others, since it is "more blessed to give than to receive." A *useless* life is necessarily an *unhappy* one. The consciousness of contributing nothing to the good of men—of being a tax and burden to society, can but be mortifying to all who are capable of something better. On the other hand, doing good brings a present blessing. The "God bless you," the grateful tear, or the loving recognition and embrace it often elicits, thrills the heart with pleasant sensations, and gives assurance of future reward.

This subject has special claims upon the professed followers of Christ, not to exclude others. They have accepted the situation of sons and daughters in the family of God, and assumed the responsibility of making the light of true religion *shine* among men. It is vastly important that they should understand the *full* measure of their duty, and the possibilities of good and evil in their respective cases.

But the *duty* does not depend alone on the acceptance of it, as is done in making a Christian profession. God imposes the duty when he bestows the talent and furnishes the opportunity. Jesus says, "The kingdom of heaven is as a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave *five* talents, to another *two*, and to another *one;* to every man according to his *several* ability." Matt. xxv, 14, 15.

The meaning is, that he gave each one some task and responsibility suited to his capacity, and required him to discharge his trust until called to give an account. Two of them carried out the arrangement and gained other talents, but the other, distrusting his master, hid his lord's money, and for this he was condemned and punished, though not a *defaulter*, for he returned the whole without loss. His *sin* was, that he had *neglected* his duty, and had earned nothing for the master or for others, who might have been benefited by his fidelity.

Every one who has any degree of intelligence,

or influence which he may use to the honor of God, or the good of men, has a work to do which he cannot neglect with impunity. Neither his *prejudices* nor *unbelief* will prove a valid excuse for him. God says, "Go work in my vineyard," and gives him the means of doing so, to the extent required, with ample *promise* of *reward*, and he must obey or suffer the consequences. *Sinner* though he claims to be, it is as much his duty to be honest, benevolent, and religious, as though he belonged to the Church. He has "good" of some sort in his possession, of which God has made him the *trustee*, for the benefit of others as well as himself, which he cannot misappropriate without being *false* to his obligations, and leaving somebody to *suffer*, and, perhaps, *perish*.

God has provided bread enough for every mouth, and light and grace enough for every soul, but owing to the unfaithfulness of his servants they are "hid," or squandered. Hence, some are miserable by *surfeit* and others by *scarcity*, and the master is *discarded* by the former and *blamed* by the latter. We can hardly see how the world

would be entirely free from sorrow were every one to do his duty, because sickness and death would still remain, but it would certainly be more like heaven than it now is.

The object of this writing is to *impress* the reader with the *fact* that he occupies a place of *honor* and *trust* from God himself, if he has *one particle* of influence, or is capable of doing *any thing* to improve the character or condition of a single living being.

Too many feel that they are of *no account*, and can do *nothing;* and they are often encouraged in this error by the "*leaders*" of the people. The result is, they look for nothing to do, and slide quietly along, wondering why they live at all. And religion and humanity suffer from their course, as *they* also do, for to live a useless life is worse than not to live at all.

Multitudes who love God and desire to do right, are more or less implicated in this matter. They stand in the market-places looking and waiting for something to happen, but no man hires them. And if they attempt any thing out of the ordinary

routine of inactivity, they stand a fair chance to get rebuked for their officiousness.

Where the established order of a Church forbids *lay* action, it may not be well to violate it, but that does not justify any one in *burying* his talent in *this* country. Church relations are *voluntary* here. If the arrangements of your Church forbid you to obey God, it is high time for you to leave it. The object of *Christ's* Church is to *develop* and *employ* talent to the best possible advantage, not to *bury* it. The tendency of wealth and aristocracy is to shut down the gate on the masses, and allow them no privileges that will interfere with the *taste* of the leaders. That was the policy which long since led Romanists to "*confession*," and it is the direct road to the *ruin* of all *vital* piety. Religion must have a fair degree of liberty to live and do good.

Most of the Churches are coming to see this, as they did not some years ago. There has been a great improvement in this respect. But while some have reformed, others have retrograded, so that we find *bondage* now, where there used to be

liberty. Eloquent ministers are brought from afar to preach popular sermons, and *officials* do the most of the other work, while live, earnest men and women are kept in the background. The result is, small and select congregations, and great dearth of spiritual results.

As to common non-professors, they are generally regarded as having no part or lot in the matter, except that they sometimes assist in the *finances*, so that if the whole community were going to destruction, the *Church*, and not they, is at fault.

This is a false and dangerous assumption. God calls sinners, in particular, to spiritual action, and they are in position to be especially effective, and *obedience* is the only thing that will save them from disgrace and ruin. They have been living for themselves—for their own gratification and emolument, and are not satisfied with the result. Only let them wake up to the fact that they are divinely called to co-operate with God in doing good to men—that this is the proper business of their lives—and their existence will assume a new importance.

"Lady Huntingdon was on her way to a brilliant assembly, when suddenly there darted into her soul these words, 'Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever,' which she had long since committed to memory without feeling their mighty import. From that hour her life revolved around a new center. She soon found peace and rest, and consecrated herself, her wealth, and her influence to God and humanity."

All may and ought to

"Live so that Death, come when he may, shall find
Us not defaulters, in arrears with Time,
Mourning, like Titus, 'I have lost a day!'
But busily engaged on something which
Shall cast a *blessing* on the world, rebound
With one to our *own breast*, and tend to give
To *man* some *benefit*,—to God some *praise*."

And it should be remembered, that no one can do the work assigned to another. There is a talent and opportunity for every necessary work, and a work for every talent. Each one filling his own proper place, the whole field is cultivated, and the whole work done. But one and another

burying his talent causes great imperfection in the result.

The call to work, therefore, comes from earth as well as heaven. The wants of the needy and the disabilities of the masses, as well as the "wickedness of the wicked," cry aloud for help on every side. Let us respond with a willing heart and open hand, and win the proffered laurels of grace and glory.

CHAPTER II.

THE SITUATION CONSIDERED.

HAVING shown that doing good to men is the proper mission of life, we are next led to inquire to what extent that mission is being executed. In asking attention to this point we are frank to concede that *much* is being done; more, perhaps, than at any previous period in the world's history.

But still, it is a *fact* that cannot be denied, that most men "seek their own." *Self* takes the *pounds* of money, talent, and service, and gives God the pence; time and sense absorb the *loaf*, while the crumbs only are given to Christ and humanity.

This may be seen by looking into the Churches of any denomination. The *few* do the talking, praying, and giving, while the masses seem to be little more than spectators; or, at least, private partners, having little interest, and doing less.

This will appear in reading the reports of benevolent collections for the year, giving the names of all who contributed *fifty* cents or more. It is surprising to see how few, comparatively, participate even in the most popular and charitable collections of the day. And not less so, to see how few contributors measure up to their means, or to the demands of the cause.

Herein lies the secret of so many objectionable contrivances in the Churches to meet current expenses, and make a fair show of benevolence. The supply of money is conceded, but there not being moral principle enough to bring it out, the managers feel it necessary to appeal to the natural appetites and passions. Hence, the fashionable *dance*, the *fair*, the *lottery*, and other similar attractions. These often secure the needed funds, where *duty* is powerless. Many will more readily pay a *dollar* in this way, where three quarters of it is returned in social gratification, than they will *give* a *shilling* as a religious duty. But money obtained by such compromises is not desirable. It is better to be poor and trust in God, than to

be rich, and abound by the *sacrifice* of principle The same is true with regard to other means of usefulness. They are limited to *few*. The minister, and a minority of the officiary, and, perhaps, here and there one of the rank and file of the Church, do nearly all the work, except what is effected in the Sabbath-school, or by some co-operative society. The social services are conducted in about the same way, and by about the same parties, though there are others in the Church who might excel them, were they disposed to participate, besides many of less intellectual capacity, who could largely contribute to the religious interest of these occasions if they would.

The happy mute who arose in a meeting with a radiant countenance, and indicated her joys and prospects by *gestures*, made a deeper impression on the people than most of her eloquent superiors. It is not so much the *words* spoken, as the impulse and heart-work they manifest, that does good. Broken language is often more powerful than the finest speech; and, taking the Churches together, there is no doubt *more* real intellectual

and spiritual talent *buried* than appears in our religious gatherings. Were it to be brought out and properly employed, the social services of the Churches would attract more attention and be much more effective.

It is a lamentable fact that many of our largest and most intellectual societies are doing *little* or *nothing* for Christ. They fail to get enough converted to repair the wastes of death. Indeed, conversions, if they have any, are like angels' visits, few and far between, though they possess every earthly facility for saving *thousands*. Will they ever come to appreciate their high calling?

We are impressed, too, with a similar state of things when we look into the *private walks* of life. How few there are who really devote themselves to doing good! Multitudes are contented with doing no harm, and this, by the way, is a great achievement. To have all our words, actions, and influence such as not to injure any one, is indispensable to the highest usefulness. This point gained, positive effort to instruct and persuade to the right, becomes natural and effective.

But how *small* a part of the Church thoughtfully and prayerfully seek daily to win souls to Christ? With how many, dear reader, have *you* seriously conversed on the subject within the last week? What efforts have you made to bring people to the house of God? How many awakening tracts have you distributed, looking toward the conversion of souls? and what other means have you employed for this object? A full answer to these questions from each member of the Christian Church would disclose, we fear, an alarming want of interest in the spiritual welfare of men.

In regard to other departments of usefulness, such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, comforting the afflicted, and the like, the Church stands better. There are many benevolent organizations looking directly after these objects, and calling for personal effort. But even this work is done by *few*. The majority, probably, take no part in it, beyond contributing a little when solicited, or feeding a beggar at the door. It is a rare thing, we apprehend, for Christians to go out and

search for misery to be relieved, as business men search for trade, or idlers for amusement. Yet here is a vast field for the employment of unoccupied talent, and one of the most profitable for cultivation that Providence presents. It is an *open* one, too. All have access to it, and it is unembarrassed by legal enactments, Church formularies, or doctrinal theories. "Whosoever *will*," may enter and work with the fullest assurance of an ample reward. Christ accepts such kindnesses as if done to himself.

We might speak also of *kind words*, which "never die;" and kind acts, and little *courtesies*, every-where practicable, and almost every-where wanting. They should adorn the pathway of *every one*, and especially of Christians, on all occasions and among all classes. They are the natural product of a right heart, and go further to commend religion to the confidence of strangers than high pretensions, or great isolated acts of public benevolence.

Yet how careless and inconsiderate many are in this respect, particularly among strangers.

Though kind and courteous about home, they seem to think that these qualities are out of place abroad, and are too apt to put on "*airs*," and do themselves great injustice.

We see this demonstrated in traveling, on almost every trip. The prevalence of it appeared lately in a little incident, of no importance in itself, but yet quite instructive: As we sat reading in a well-filled car, a gentleman came rushing in and asked if the seat by our side was engaged, to which we replied in the negative. Asking us to keep it for him, he hurried forward, as if having other responsibilities to look after, but directly returned, and the cars started. Noticing that he was deeply interested in some one near the end of the car, and finding, by inquiry, that it was his wife, we proposed to exchange seats with her, and let her sit with him, to which he peremptorily demurred, saying, it was too much of a sacrifice for any gentleman to make for a stranger. We assured him it was *no* sacrifice at all, but a real *pleasure*, and, suiting the action to the word, immediately went forward and effected the change.

This little affair, the most natural and proper, seemed to overwhelm him with astonishment and gratitude, and with many expressions of pleasure he promised to remember us in his will, and we parted friends.

Such courtesies cost nothing except the loss of selfishness, which we are better without, and pay well in personal satisfaction and usefulness to others. What a pity that every one is not a bright and shining light in these *cheap*, but *mighty* agencies!

The moral effect of this state of society is disastrous. There are, perhaps, more genuine Christians in the land to-day than at any previous period, but their influence is greatly neutralized by the short-comings of the masses of delinquents to whom we have referred. The world judges of religion by its *bad* specimens rather than its *good* ones. So long as people see the Church crowded with members, who seem much like themselves, it is difficult for them to believe that religion is of great account, especially where they have no dear pious friend at hand to demonstrate its excellency

by a brighter and better spirit and example, as many have not.

We often hear it said in reference to professors, "If such and such men are Christians, we don't wish to be." But this judgment may arise from some difference of opinion, or difficulty in business, where the speaker is alone to blame, and should create no prejudice against the condemned parties in the absence of other information. It is, however, often traceable to sad improprieties, if not actual sin.

Professors of religion who act about as they did before their conversion, except that they go to Church more and partake of the sacrament,—who show little interest in God, the salvation of sinners, or the claims of humanity,—really *injure* the cause rather than help it. They say to the unbelieving world by their example, that religion is only a *name*, and not the divine reality it assumes to be; and that a life of sinful gratification is to be preferred. And, if their Church wins souls to Christ and builds them up in holiness, it must do it without their aid, and against their

influence. They betray the cause they have solemnly vowed to commend and promote. They encourage *sin* more than holiness, and enjoy the world more than they do God.

Here lies the real *secret* of the inefficiency of many Churches, which have Christian pastors and some sincere and devout members. They are overwhelmed by the *worldly* influence of the majority. If they succeed in converting men at all, it is to a very limited extent. The *real* laborers are few, and they work against fearful odds—against the world, the flesh, and the devil, and, what is still worse, against the spirit and example of three quarters of the Church.

What hope would there be for an army of men going into battle with a respectable foe, under these circumstances? Defeat would be inevitable. Union is strength. Gideon, to human calculation, ran a great risk in reducing his motley forces to *three hundred* men, but the wisdom of God ordained it. It gave him an army of *one heart* and mind, and a ready victory. The Churches may find it necessary to do something of the same sort,

before they will be able to take the world for Christ.

There is, also, a great want of *symmetry* among the more spiritual and active members. While they seem almost perfect in some particulars, they are strangely wanting in others. Claiming the highest spirituality, they are idlers, living as *mendicants*. There were such in the early Church, of whom Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, "We hear there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness *they work*, and eat their own bread." 2 Thess. iii, 11, 12. In his first letter to Timothy he discarded a similar class who were "wandering about from house to house; and not only *idle*, but *tattlers* also, and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not." Chap. v, 13. Every inconsistency of this sort brings reproach upon the cause, which is not easy to be removed.

Persons, too, of high pretensions as to piety, sometimes seem below *par* in their *humanity*.

They are anxious to save souls, but are not particularly moved to help the poor and unfortunate. They carry the Gospel, but not *bread.* They feel intensely for the conversion of sinners, but show little anxiety about their temporal sufferings. And by this defect in their sympathies they have greatly damaged their influence and their particular cause.

Others of this general class sometimes injure themselves by carelessness with regard to *finances.* While they have seemed to be especially scrupulous about the anise, mint, and cummin of certain laws of Christian propriety, they are not as prompt to pay their debts as others of less fervor. They appear to lack a well-enlightened *business conscience.* Besides, they have sometimes seemed to come short of the charity which St. Paul says, "Suffereth long, and is kind; doth not behave itself unseemly; seeketh not her own; is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil; beareth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things." Still we believe that consistent piety is gaining ground in the world. We mention these things to

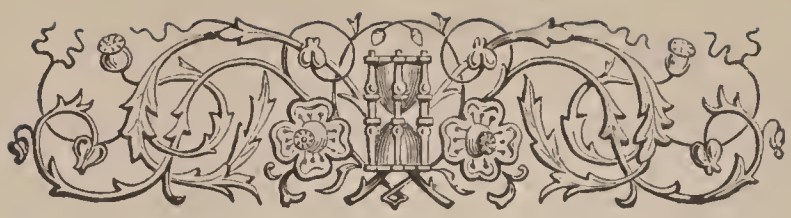
encourage the more devout Christians to be on their guard to avoid the "very *appearance* of evil."

But considering how many professing Christians positively *bury* the talents given them, and how imperfectly others use theirs, the call for improvement is loud and imperative. May God speak with a voice that shall reach every heart, and arouse all to proper activity!

Such imperfections in good people are to be lamented. Taken in connection with the prevailing inactivity of the masses, the way to success seems badly obstructed; yet something can be done, by each one acting in his own proper sphere, and using just the talent which God has given him. If, however, we wait until the dead awake to new life, and the imperfections of the living members are purged away, little progress will be realized.

Let each one act for himself. The words of St. James are full of encouragement where he says, "If any of you do err from the truth, and *one* convert him; let *him* know, that *he* which con-

verteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." Chap. v, 19, 20. "*One* convert him—let *him* know." *One* can do even this with God's help. Reader, be encouraged. *You* may do great things for this wicked world.



CHAPTER III.

THE POSSIBILITIES OF USEFULNESS.

THE reasons why Christians are not more active and useful are numerous and diversified. The principal one is found, no doubt, in their lack of a *mind* for the work. There are others, however, which have great influence over honest men, that are worthy of notice.

One of the most prevalent is a *felt* sense of *incompetence*. Looking to some grand result of difficult achievement, many conclude that it is beyond their reach, and settle down to do nothing. They overlook the fact that in Christian work, *little* means often lead to *great* results. The promise and blessing of God are not taken into the account as they should be in all such reckoning.

Good men even to this day want to do some "*great* thing," and seldom dare to hope for success without doing it. To their apprehension, the

objects which they especially covet, require intelligence, eloquence, wealth, social position, or something else which they do not possess, and therefore they are excusable in leaving them to others. But this is a mistake. In the Divine economy the means proposed are as *nothing*, when compared with the magnitude and difficulty of the undertaking.

When the champion of the Philistines defied the armies of the living God, Saul and all Israel were dismayed because they had no man who was in any physical or military sense a match for him. But young David, untrained in battle, remembering that God delivered him out of the paw of the lion and the bear, and believing that he was interested in the then present issue, and would vindicate himself, really *coveted* the conflict against fearful odds, and won the field. "The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favor to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all." *Eccles.* ix, 11. God often calls men to undertake tasks

beyond their measure, that he may help them in a way to exclude all glorying on their part, and embolden them to trust in him.

Being assured that what is proposed has His *approval*, and ought to be done, especially where others dare not undertake it, and one feels moved in that direction, the presumption is that his incompetence will be no bar to success. God employed a *raven*, a bird of no value, to feed one of his most honored prophets. He seldom converts great men by their equals. He more frequently brings the father to Christ by his own child, and the master by his slave. His people, however weak, are fully authorized to strike high. They should account nothing *hard* where He is interested, and never distrust their ability where He calls. Moses had little faith in himself when summoned to deliver Israel from Egyptian bondage. He urged his slowness of speech and other disabilities in favor of being excused, and he was honest in doing it, yet he found himself, with God's help, equal to the task.

Children are generally estimated at a low figure

in this connection. They are so young and ignorant, and inexperienced and uninfluential in great matters, and among great folks, that little is expected of them. Yet they often achieve what their seniors have no courage to attempt. Who has not read of the little captive maid in the land of Syria? She had heard something of God and his prophet while at home. The trouble of her mistress, whose husband was an honorable man, but likely to die soon, laid heavily upon her heart. In the fullness of her sympathy, she ventured to say to her one day, "Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria, for he would recover him of his leprosy." This innocent breathing of a kind heart made a *deep* impression. Somebody went and reported it to Naaman himself. It so impressed him that he told it to his king. The king thought there might be something in it, and immediately wrote a letter to the king of Israel asking him to recover his servant of his leprosy. Thus we see how a little slave girl moved a whole nation.

But her work did not end here. The letter ex-

cited the king of Israel beyond description, and he rent his clothes, and exclaimed, "Am I God to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? Wherefore consider . . . how he seeketh a quarrel against me." This well-meant utterance of the little girl had nearly created a *war*. Kings are not always great or wise. But Elisha interposed and tranquilized the king, and so miraculously healed Naaman that he felt constrained to say, "Now I *know* that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel," and determined to offer no burnt offering or sacrifice to any other gods.

So the issue of the affair was glorious, showing that "God had chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and the *base* things which are despised—a little captive girl, for instance—and things which are not to bring to naught things that are."

The *tenderness* of childhood is just adapted to certain results which seem to lie out of the reach of mature life. Children have a special influence

over their parents, and often bring them to Christ, where all other agencies have failed. The prophecy has already been fulfilled in many cases that "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a *little child* shall lead them."

We see this illustrated in the case of one drawn into the Sunday-school and trained for God. She begged of her father one day not to profane the name she had learned to love, which so enraged him that he forbade her ever mentioning the subject to him again. But she could not refrain, and repeated her tender remonstrance a few days after, and was driven from her home. The father went to his work, but was unhappy. He followed the poor thing with his eyes, as she clambered over the hill with her little parcel, and imagined her feelings. His unfatherly heart relented, and, dropping his sickle, he pursued her to the point where she vanished from his sight.

Disappointed at not seeing her again, and gazing about in anxious solicitude, her tender voice

fell upon his ear from behind a projecting rock, saying, "O God, bless my dear father, and make him a good man." This was too much; he was completely subdued, and rushing to the sacred spot, he folded the dear one to his bosom and bore her back in triumph: he becoming a new man. Children *may* do good—much good—even to some who are far above them in years and influence.

Children have a capacity, all their own, that is often mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, and they are coming to be appreciated. The Sunday-school was designed almost *exclusively* for their benefit, but it has scattered its blessings broadcast among others. The recent discovery that children can HELP the missionary, and other benevolent interests, is one of the *brightest* and most useful developments of the age. It *interests* and elevates them by recognizing their capacity and responsibility, and making them *partners* in the great enterprises of the Church. Besides, it trains them to habits of thought and action that will be likely to influence them for good through life; and where so many little hearts

and hands are concentrated on the same grand object, it cannot fail. God seems to honor their efforts with special success.

Said a superintendent to his scholars one day, "I want each of you to bring a new scholar to the school next Sunday." "I can't get any new scholars," said several of the children to themselves. "I will try what I can do," was the whispered response of a few others. One of the latter class went home to his father and said, "Father, will you go to Sunday-school with me?" "I can't read, my son," replied the father, with a look of shame. "Our teachers will teach you, dear father," answered the boy, with respect and feeling in his tones. "Well, I'll go," said the father. "He went, learned to read, sought and found the Saviour, and at length became a colporteur. Years passed on, and that man had established *four hundred Sunday-schools*, into which *thirty-five thousand* children were gathered." That boy's efforts, by God's grace, saved his father, and his father, being saved, did a great work.

Let the idea, then, that *children* have nothing to

do in the necessary reforms of the age, be utterly and forever dismissed. Rather let it be impressed upon all of us that the Church cannot accomplish her noble work without their co-operation. They are positively indispensable to the attainment of certain objects, with regard to which they can exert more influence than all others, however active and well disposed. This training will help them, too, for future efforts. "Practice makes perfect." Giving *pennies* now, they will give *dollars* as easily by and by; then *hundreds*, and *thousands* as their means increase. So of other work; their *capacity* and *tact* will increase with their growth and strengthen with their strength.

The *poor*, and the less intelligent classes, too, are apt to excuse themselves from effort to do good on the ground of *incapacity*. Most of them, like the man mentioned by the Saviour, *bury* their "*one*" talent in the earth. They fail to see that each individual has a specific work assigned him, that can be done by *no* other. They have an influence in their own sphere that Christians of *ten* talents can never exert. They understand the prejudices and sympa-

thies of their associates, and how to manage them, as others do not.

Bunyan, John Nelson, Harlan Page, and others of their grade, did a work which their superiors would never have undertaken, and never could have accomplished if they had. Vital religion has often been greatly promoted by persons who could not even read a word. Some of the most effective workers in the Church have but little general information, wealth, or social influence. But they know God, and understand his will; and they know men, and how to approach them, and are filled with desire to save souls. Here is their power.

We had the honor of being associated with one of this class for two years, to say nothing of many others. His education was very limited, and his business and position gave him little claim to attention. But he aimed to do good and he did it. Considering his circumstances, and how blundering and feeble he was in public speaking, his influence was *amazing*. But he was so *full* of Christian love, and so constant and persistent in his endeavors to bring people to Christ, that he

was universally respected. Others excelled him in talent, but *none* in usefulness, proving that in this cause where there is a "*mind*" for the work, "he that is *feeble* shall be as David, and the house of David as the angel of the Lord." With God's blessing little means go a great ways.

Many are less useful than they might be, from a misapprehension as to their *opportunities*. They believe they could do something in other circumstances, but not as they are now situated. This is a cunning device of the enemy to hinder the work. It was suggested to Nehemiah when he contemplated rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, and not without considerable show of reason; but he was not to be thwarted in this way. Though the object of his pious ambition seemed utterly beyond his reach, still, using properly such means as he had, God enlarged those means, and miraculously crowned the enterprise with success.

Opportunities for *great* achievements seldom occur, and to but few persons. Chances for smaller things are ever at hand. If, however, they do not appear, we should seek them. Jesus

went about seeking opportunities to do good, and doing it. His visits to the markets, seaside, and other places of popular resort, were influenced by this motive. His early disciples followed his example, and so should their successors. We have no right to sit down and wait for something to happen; we should be on the alert to find some work that we can do to advantage.

A Boston merchant of our acquaintance, acting on this principle, resolved to let no day pass without personally persuading some one to come to Christ. This, of course, led him to look out for opportunities. But on retiring one night, it occurred to him that he had said nothing to any one on the subject during that day. At first he saw no chance to redeem himself, but remembering that a grocer near by generally kept open late, he arose, dressed, and went to the store, and found the man in good condition for conversation—alone and at leisure. That visit was the means of bringing the old gentleman to God and the Church, with several of his family. We have known the same brother to pay the expenses of

young men to a distant meeting, with the view of having them converted, and often with the happiest results.

Many are restrained from proper effort by forgetting that the simplest means often secure the grandest ends. God will not allow us to do much in the matter of our own salvation, or that of others, lest we should be *proud* of it, and take some glory to ourselves. Yet he insists on our doing something, but so little as to show that the *power* is of Him, and not of us. Thus, in the siege of Jericho, the priests were required to surround the city and blow their rams' horns, and the people to shout aloud, all of which was powerless in itself, but God gave them the victory. If Christians would remember that it is "not by might nor by power," but by the Spirit of God that they are to do good, they would have more courage to use the little talents they possess.

Aged and *infirm* people are apt to imagine that they can do no good, and are of no use, and often wonder that they are not called home. This is a mistake. They can *shine* in the circle where they

move, and accomplish something beyond the reach of others. A pastor hearing the moans of an old parishioner, who regarded her days of usefulness at an end and desired to depart, corrected her by saying that she was useful. But she could not see how, when he told her she was useful to him. "In the first place," said he, "you are *always* at church, and it does me good to see you in your place. Then, you are always *wide awake* while some of my people are asleep, and *that* helps me. Better still, you seem *interested*, and often express your feelings in *tears*, and that does me a *great deal* of good. I could hardly preach without you to help me. I hope you will not die while I am your pastor."

The presence of a *happy old Christian* in the house of God, to whom the world has few charms, is a benediction, not to the preacher only, but to all who see him. Indeed, his presence anywhere is a *living epistle*, which carries conviction to the hearts of all observers that there is a real *divinity* and excellence in a religion that adorns and cheers *old age*. Lazarus was penniless and help-

lessly infirm, but he made his mark and wrote his name on the scroll of immortality. *Millions* have been comforted in trouble by his wonderful experience, and millions now are singing along the rugged path of life in the hope of following him to Abraham's bosom. Indeed, the Bible would be incomplete without his biography.

The *poor widow*, too, who, perhaps, regarded herself as a striking specimen of worthlessness, is another illustration of our point. She was a good woman, and went to the house of God from pure motives. She prized its services, and naturally desired to contribute something toward its expenses, but she was poor, *very* poor. *Two mites*, equal to two fifths of a cent, composed all her living. *One* would have been a large contribution, but her heart was full, and she gave *both*, and passed on, as she supposed, unnoticed and unknown. But Jesus, who had been silently sitting over against the treasury watching the givers, (as he may do still,) was so deeply affected, that he called his disciples to him and said unto them, "Verily I say unto you, that this poor widow hath

cast more in than all they which have cast into the treasury; for all they did cast in of their *abundance*, but she of her *want* did cast in *all* that she had, even *all her living*." Mark xii, 43. That *all* was but a *trifle*. But the example of the poor widow, so highly commended by the Saviour, has done more to promote Christian *liberality*, than all the eloquence of the ages. Though dead, she still speaks throughout the civilized world.

If there are other classes who are tempted to think that they can do *no* good, let them take courage. The fact of their not being taken to heaven, is clear proof that they are *needed* here. God has some good use for them. It may be to furnish an example of *patient suffering*, to show the *power* of religion; or, possibly, to speak a kind and saving word to some one. We would encourage them in the language of one of our sweetest songs :—

"If you have not gold and silver,
Ever ready to command;
If you cannot t'ward the needy
Reach an ever-open hand;

You can visit the afflicted,
O'er the erring you can weep;
You can be a true disciple,
Sitting at the Saviour's feet.

"If you cannot in the harvest
Garner up the richest sheaves,
Many a grain both ripe and golden
Will the careless reapers leave;
Go, and glean among the briers
Growing rank against the wall,
For it may be that their shadow
Hides the heaviest wheat of all.

"Do not, then, stand idly waiting
For some greater work to do;
Fortune is a lazy goddess—
She will never come to you:
Go and toil in any vineyard,
Do not fear to do or dare;
If you want a field of labor,
You can find it anywhere."

If *children*, and others from whom little is to be, expected, may do *so much*, how *great* must be the responsibility of the more highly favored ones, who *abound* in talents and other means of useful-

ness. Many are doing great *injustice* to themselves, and to their fellow-beings, to say nothing of their transgression toward God. And all this for some trifling gratification, or to avoid some little cross, which, once lifted, would be a support and comfort to them. Thus they are making life a *sad failure*, to be lamented at the last, instead of a joyous triumph and a passport to heaven.

This view of the subject indicates the importance of each doing the work providentially assigned him. It is here as in building—if one class of workmen come short, it hinders another. If the diggers and stone masons fail to lay the foundations, the carpenters cannot erect the building, nor the plasterers and painters perform their part. One is dependent upon another, and the best result is realized where each does his work promptly and faithfully.

St. Paul, illustrating the subject by reference to the body, says, "They are many members," of diversified adaptations, "yet but one body." All are necessary. "The eye cannot say to the head, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to

the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more, those members of the body which seem to be more *feeble* are necessary; and those members of the body which we think to be *less* honorable, upon those we bestow more *abundant* honor. . . . That there may be no *schism* in the body, but that the members should have the same care one of another." 1 Cor. xii, 19, 25.

Instead of being *anxious* or *jealous* of others, who seem to hold a more honorable position than ourselves, we should be thankful that we have *any* place among God's children, and feel like one of old, who said, "I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." Psa. lxxxiv, 10.

CHAPTER IV.

IMPORTANCE OF RIGHT AIMS.

LITTLE streams issuing from the mountain strike directly for the ocean, and never diverge one inch from the nearest practicable way. It is a standing condition of success in secular business that we aim at something *definite*. "Ships, to be profitable, must be loaded, equipped, and sailed with reference to a certain port."

The same is true in *morals*. One grand paramount object, however, involves many *subordinate* ones, as a determination to see Paris carries with it the necessary intermediate steps thereto.

The primary mission of Jesus was to save lost men, but this led him to do all kinds of good. So the main object of strictly religious effort is to convert sinners, and bring them into complete and filial subordination to God. As sinners, they are depraved, selfish rebels, without God and without

hope in the world. They need to be brought to serious reflection, repentance, prayer, and newness of life, so as to regard God as their heavenly Father, and *delight* in him more than in any other being or thing.

The want of *right aims* is a prolific source of many failures. Ministers are often sadly at fault at this point. For instance, one who had a grand opportunity to do good, standing in the presence of an immense audience, discoursed ably for more than an hour to prove "that Christ did *not* die for the devil." And he succeeded to a charm, but gained nothing, for the reason that no one of his hearers had any doubt on the subject at the outset. And it was impossible to see, if they had, how his establishing the fact assumed could exert any moral influence over them. We regarded it, therefore, as a *lost* opportunity to do good.

Another minister, being called upon to preach on a revival occasion, spent the evening in proving "the *personality* of the devil," which, under the circumstances, had no more to do with the momentous objects of the hour than had the partic-

ular locality of Jacob's well. He had probably been pondering the subject, and followed the current of his later thoughts rather than his judgment, or the promptings of the occasion. Mistakes of this sort are often made, sometimes for want of real sympathy with Jesus in his love for sinners, from misjudgment, or a desire to nurse some metaphysical dogma, and gain a reputation for depth and originality. But it shows well for the piety and good sense of the people that such preachers are not much sought after.

The same defect is often manifest in other public services. It would be impossible for a stranger to guess what they are designed to effect, if anything; whereas every meeting should have a *specific object*, and that object should be apparent in all the exercises. This is an element of power, and one of the secrets of success, and is as necessary in prayer as in teaching. *Right*, specific prayer generally brings an answer; and it is the address to men which calls for definite action that takes effect. Mere generalities and abstractions, to whomsoever addressed, are *powerless* for good.

Prayer-meetings should gather the fruit of pulpit and other sowings, and they often do so; but they too frequently appear to be *aimless*. They are conducted somewhat on the following platform, namely: Prayer is a duty, and therefore it is offered; religion is a good thing, and therefore it is commended, by speeches and songs of praise, until the time is exhausted. We have lately witnessed one, which was opened by singing, prayer, and a Scripture lesson in the usual way, when, by considerable urging, the leader succeeded in drawing out *six* additional prayers, all good, but miscellaneous and *repetitious* in their askings, showing that they meant nothing beyond the general good-will and blessing of the Being addressed. Then, within half an hour of the close, Christians were all invited to "speak, and admonished to speak *short*," so as to give all a chance. The talk that followed was also good, but *pointless*, like the preceding prayers.

Our objection to this meeting was, 1. That it aimed at nothing definite;—it was like a ship at sea, sailing at random. 2. That, embracing a large

number of unconverted people, it did not make a special effort to *persuade* them to be reconciled to God, then and there. Had this been made the grand aim of the meeting, and been presented by the leader as the all-absorbing thought of the hour, pressed by the opening hymn, lesson, and prayer, and followed by *pungent* exhortations, there is good reason to believe that it would have been a success. 3. We object to the seven pointless prayers, though wisely relieved by good music. They merely asked God to do what the people should have done for themselves, or to modify his requirements, and bless them on terms of their own devising. A little cross-bearing in the way of *confession*, humiliation, and Christian effort, would have accomplished more in less time. 4. We object, too, that *everybody* was called upon to speak.

In the first place, it was impossible for them to do so in the remaining few minutes. Besides, many of them had no power to make themselves *heard* by half the people present, and but little capacity to meet the necessities of the occasion in

other respects, however pious. Had it been a small, private meeting, the call would have been more appropriate. But a large, public prayer-meeting, designed to *save* men, should command the *best* talent of the Church. We have been surprised to see that where extreme efforts are made to "*man* the pulpit," prayer-meetings are often left to run themselves; as much as to say, they are of no account. But this is not the style of prayer-meetings which really "mean business." Where there is a fair capacity, and a proper intention in the leadership, things take a different course.

Right aims are equally necessary to private *personal* work. Even where there is an effort, there is a vast waste of time and talent in "playing off" and around for the want of them. A man of settled purpose comes to the point, and tells just what he wants, and why he wants it. He will seek such a state of mind, and such an attitude toward the subject of his benevolent ambition, as will render his success probable before he starts, and will then make every movement bear upon his object.

Irreligious people, however moral, courteous, or humane, will do nothing in this work, for the reason that they are *not* interested. To do spiritual good, we must be spiritually minded. Then, whether we preach, teach, sing, exhort, pray, feed the hungry, or clothe the naked, every thing will center here. Such are the prejudices to be overcome, that less directness will be insufficient.

This indicates why the multitudinous services of Christians effect so little. They are *cold*, educational, preliminary, abstract, procrastinating, and propose no immediate results. Jesus pursued a different course. He instructed the fishermen he would save to forsake all and follow him, *then* and *there*, and they did so. The apostles preached the Gospel to the Jews, and proved from the Scriptures that Jesus, whom they had crucified, was "both Lord and Christ," but closed in the practical and emphatic words, "*repent, and be baptized* every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost;" showing that they

aimed not only at *specific*, but *immediate*, spiritual results. Acts ii, 38.

The absence of this aim in the Church is apparent in almost every public service, except where a revival is being sought, or is in actual progress. *Much* of our *preaching* has little more adaptation to *convert* men than a lecture on physical geography. Though scholarly, eloquent, and triumphant in maintaining its points, it contributes nothing to this end. The same is often true of Sunday-school instructions. The main point is unfortunately overlooked. No *spiritual* impression is sought or made; and some leaders are so bold as to claim that the proper object of these schools is *education*, and not salvation. The fact that many are converted is attributable to the presence and labors of a few real Christians, who seek to save.

Right aims are the secret of success with men of *inferior* capabilities and circumstances,—they strike for the desired results. If preachers, they seek to bring sinners to Christ in every effort, and not merely to preach *good* sermons. With them

the sermon is of no account, unless it contributes to this object. Without education, or the support of wealth and influence, many have won hundreds, and even thousands, to God and goodness, while their so-called superiors are in doubt whether they have been the means of saving a single soul. St. Paul worked to *save* men. "To the weak," he says, "became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means *save some.*" This was his all-absorbing thought, and controlled his whole life. If ministers should imitate his Christ-like example in this respect, they would have little use for most of their old sermons, and "the word of God would become quick and powerful" in their hands.

The same is true of private Christians. With this object always and prominently in view wherever they are, or however engaged, it is impossible for them to fail of doing good, because the saving of men carries with it every subordinate advantage. The heart that would *save* a man, will kindly regard his minor interests—*feed* him if

hungry; *reform* him, if vicious; and *comfort* him, if in trouble.

"Aim at the highest prize; if there thou fail,
Thou'lt haply reach to one not far below."

Thus out of mind, as it evidently is with most professors, we may go on and *on*, doing a little here and there, but ever missing the mark, and ever dissatisfied.

A pastor entering upon a new charge said to his people that his object in coming to them was to save sinners—that all his services would be aimed at that—and he wished the Church to co-operate with him. This announcement was carried out for two years, and many hearts seemed to be *centered* upon that one grand point. The people understood that their salvation was the object of every service. Some surrendered the first month, others the next, and so on during the whole term, and as they did so they fell into line, and did what they could to save others. The result was over *three hundred* were added to the Church, in monthly installments of from *five* to

thirty, by the ordinary means of grace—a crowded house, *summer* and winter, nobody worn out by overwork—all satisfied and happy, for all had shared in the labor, and few backsliders.

We have no doubt that other Churches would do as well on this plan. It concentrates all hearts on one object large enough to engross every thought and energy, and leaves little room for dispute or diversion. *Success* was *expected* at every meeting; and, therefore, every one desired to be present. New speakers were constantly coming to the front to tell what God had done for them. It was very much like a common revival, only it was conducted alone by home agencies, and was *perpetual,* instead of lasting only a few days or weeks. There were no *extra* sermons, or extraordinary laborers, or efforts, except such as naturally occur in any common Church which sets out to save the people.

The reader may say, "But that was some time ago, and things are not as they used to be." True, it was when prejudice was *very strong*, and the *talent* and social influence of the Church much

less than at present. We never saw the time when it was easier to save men than *now*. The doctrines of the Gospel are generally accepted as they were not formerly, while certain fatal errors that used to hinder the work are openly repudiated by their old advocates. All that is lacking to make the Gospel a complete success is, for its friends to concentrate their great power on this one point, and adopt the *common-sense* methods provided for its achievement.

But so long as the Churches only seek to "*keep along*, and pay expenses," and maintain a good quiet state of things among themselves, few will be converted, and they but very imperfectly. The work really demands *Christians*—not mere *professors*. And Christians can do it with God's help, which will never be lacking when needed and prayerfully sought.

CHAPTER V.

A MIND FOR THE WORK.

NUMEROUS accomplishments are necessary to constitute a perfect workman in the cause of God, and but few persons, if any, possess all of them. As there are diversities of gifts among Christians, so there are diversities of tastes and sympathies, in general, corresponding to human wants. This is necessary in order to have the supply equal to the demand. Some are particularly interested in children, and care little for the aged. Others are absorbed with education, believing that ignorance is the prolific mother of all evil. Merely supplying temporal wants seems to them to be "small business." Others still, spend their main force upon the interests of the soul, appearing quite oblivious of other obligations.

A similar difference is observable, too, with re-

gard to *motives*. Many act purely from natural sympathy. They are constitutionally sensitive, and cannot witness suffering without being moved to pity. Some are influenced also by the fear, that neglect to meet the emergency seeming to demand their interposition will be visited with disaster upon themselves. Others, unaffected by either of these principles, have done many noble deeds from *pure selfishness*—"to be seen of men"—for some social, political, or other personal advantage—or, perhaps, to secure a good name among coming generations. Even this is better than to do nothing good. St. Paul found some in his day who preached "Christ of envy, strife, and contention, not sincerely," yet he rejoiced to have Christ preached, even in this way, rather than not at all.

But the highest motive of benevolent action is *love* to God and man. That love which "suffereth long and is kind, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own." This is only acquired by special effort; but it endows one with a *heart* for every good word and work.

Humanity is less comprehensive, and is made up of kind feelings, dispositions, and sympathies; especially a disposition to relieve persons in distress, and to treat all creatures with tenderness for their own sake. It is a sublime principle, and should be cultivated in children from the first moment of their rational existence. No good thing can be expected from one who has not some degree of this feeling, except where it shall become necessary to the attainment of selfish ends.

But with a *kind heart* we are prepared for a measure of usefulness in every condition. At least we shall readily evince friendly interest in all, and look, speak, and act *tenderly* toward them. And these expenseless agencies have their influence, not upon subordinates only, but upon those who rank far above us. The beautiful lines of Whittier are full of truth :—

"A little word in kindness spoken,
A motion, or a tear,
Has often healed the heart that's broken,
And made a friend sincere.

"A word, a look, has crushed to earth
Full many a budding flower,
Which, had a smile but owned its birth,
Would bless life's darkest hour.

"Then deem it not an idle thing
A pleasant word to speak;
The face you wear, the thought you bring,
A heart may heal, or break."

With this outfit, duty becomes a pleasure. Doing good is no longer a tax, but a *luxury*. We instinctively go forth to look for opportunities, as a bee for flowers; and, being prepared for any service within our scope, we readily find one. No day can pass without the world being made happier, and, perhaps *better*, by our influence. Every body is pleased and profited. The stranger receives a cheerful look and needed information; the mourner, a word of comfort; the thirsty, a cup of cold water; the weary, means of rest; and so on, till every occurring necessity is met according to circumstances. Were this disposition generally prevalent in society, the pleasures of life would be

greatly enhanced, and its sorrows correspondingly abated.

And, if we are not deceived, the tendency of the times is in this direction. Christianity has achieved as much for *humanity* as for religion. Even where its spiritual claims are not generally accepted, it has improved the philanthropy of the people to a remarkable degree, as may be seen in the recent multiplication of free institutions for all classes of sufferers. The late report of the State Board of Charities of Massachusetts reveals the fact that there are *seventy-four* distinct benevolent organizations in the city of Boston, such as orphanages, dispensaries, hospitals, infirmaries, etc.; and sixty-two others in the State outside of that city. Besides, there are many similar establishments connected with the local Churches and Public Boards, providing for almost every species of earthly trouble.

The late effort of the "New York Times" to give health and comfort to *poor children* in our crowded cities, is another evidence of the improvement assumed. Over *fifty thousand* have

been taken out on pleasant and healthful excursions through the agency of that paper. And, we may add, that the generally approved measures of Mr. Bergh and others to prevent cruelty to animals, is another evidence of the improvement claimed.

In visiting Asbury Park the other day, our attention was called to a comfortable establishment recently started by benevolent ladies in Philadelphia for the benefit of their sisters who are unable to pay the enormous prices charged for board at our popular sea-side watering-places. The idea occurred to one of them, and she expressed it to others, who approved; when a meeting was called, and a committee appointed to carry the project into effect. In a few weeks the land was secured by the kind liberality of Mr. Bradley, the owner of the Park, in a beautiful location about equidistant from the sea and the Lake; and a house erected, furnished, and filled with ladies, at about *one quarter* the price charged at ordinary boarding-houses, and less than *one half* the kind projectors pay for their own board

in the same house when there. It was an admirable conception, and arrangements are being made to expand it to accommodate many more. All praise to the noble ladies, and to their God! whom they serve day and night in loving consideration of his less favored children.

While, therefore, we mourn over our shortcomings and misdoings as a nation, we have reason to thank God and take courage in view of so many evidences of increasing sympathy for the unfortunate. God has manifested a remarkable interest in this class of his children, and spurned all service which ignores their sufferings. Besides, the cultivation of kind affections toward the *creature* naturally tends to reverence for the *Creator*, and will sooner or later lead to a proper recognition of spiritual and eternal concerns.

There is another field of activity to which we are called that requires additional endowments. The *natural* man can appreciate *temporal* things, because he has experience in them. He can easily see the misfortunes connected with sickness, poverty, ignorance, and friendlessness, and, if

kindly disposed and favorably situated, may be efficient in providing relief. But there are other wants which he does not understand, and for which he has no remedy. We refer to the wants of the *soul*. Pressed with these, many ask, "Who will show us any good?" *He* can give no answer. They cry out, in agony of spirit, "O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" *He* is confounded. Slaves to their own appetites and passions, they are carried away captive by the devil at his will, but *he* cannot help them. Having no sympathy with Jesus in his longings for the holiness, happiness, and salvation of sinners, *he* has no concern for them, and is powerless to lead them to the cross.

To be a successful worker in this interest he needs to be "*born again*"—to be made a *new* creature in Christ, and be filled with the Spirit. David had no concern about the religious condition of others until he cried unto the Lord, and the Lord brought him out of the "horrible pit and miry clay, and put a *new song* into his mouth, even praise to God." Psalm xl, 2. Then he was im-

mediately filled with solicitude, and determined to do what he could, saying, "Many shall see it and fear, and shall trust in the Lord." Falling into sin again, and praying to have the "joy of salvation" restored to him, he pledged himself to renew his efforts to reform others in these remarkable words: "Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee;" as if he had said, that without a *happy* assurance of his own salvation he could do nothing for others, but with it, he could so teach them that they would be converted, which is true with regard to people in general.

This indicates the difference in the style of teaching. Some teach *officially*, or *professionally*, because it is their business, and have little concern about the result. Others teach purely to *win souls*, and hold them to Christ, and cannot rest without success. The Spirit of the Lord is upon them, and they feel impelled by love and godly solicitude to seek the lost by all possible means, and aid those who are trying to run the heavenly race. With this they seem enshrouded

in a kind of celestial glory which the blind can hardly fail to see, and desire that others should share in their pleasures. Thus, when Andrew found the Saviour, he *first* went to his own brother, Simon, and said, "We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus."

A *formal* professor of religion lately made her appearance at a special means of grace, and participated in the holy sacrament. As she received the cup, she was enabled to say in faith for the first time in her life, "His blood was shed for the remission of my *sins*," and such new life came to her heart that she was exceedingly happy. *Intense* solicitude for her friends, that they might enter into the same joy, led her to write immediately to her uncle, a member of her own Church, but a stranger to her *new* love, inviting him to come to the meeting. He did so, and seeing what God had done for her, sought and found the same blessing.

Christians of less ardor may be very rigid and exact, and make considerable show of zeal for

the Lord with some effect. But when they really *break down* with loving concern for souls, the surrounding *ice* will yield.

Rev. Mr. Earle, the evangelist, speaking of commencing a series of union meetings in the State of New York, says, "My *first* aim was to preach so as to lead the Churches nearer to Christ. Accordingly I prepared five sermons for Christians, as clear and pointed as I knew how to make them. The first four had no apparent effect. I wondered at it. The fifth was prepared with a *scorpion* in the lash; it was a severe one, and the last harsh sermon I have preached, and the last I ever expect to preach; but this, too, was powerless.

"I then went to my closet, and on my knees asked Jesus what could be the difficulty with those Christians. It did not enter my mind that the trouble could be anywhere else than among them. I had preached with tears in my eyes, and had been anxious to see a revival, and had no thought but that the preacher was in a *right* state. But there, in my closet, God revealed to me my own heart, showing me that the difficulty was with *my-*

self, and not with the Church. I found myself as cold as those I was trying to benefit. My tears, even in the pulpit, had been like water running from the top of a cake of ice when the warm rays of the sun are falling upon its surface, but which becomes hard and cold again as soon as the sun goes down."

He then went to God for himself, and became all *tender* and *sweet*, and preached again, when the people broke down, confessed their own need of a special preparation of heart, and from that hour the work went forward.

The woman of Samaria, who met the Saviour at Jacob's well, was not in condition to exert much religious influence upon the community. But becoming a *happy* believer in Christ by means of his ministrations, she forgot her errand at the well, and flew into the city, and announced her discovery so *strangely* and *convincingly* that many believed her testimony, and others were so affected that they accepted her invitation, and hurried to the well to see for themselves. The result was *wonderful*. Many of the Samaritans believed on

him, and said, unto the woman, "*Now* we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." John iv, 42.

Heart piety has a language of its own which carries conviction to others. It has a *bearing* too, embracing a variety of little things, such as *dress*, *gait*, *gestures*, etc., which it instinctively assumes, and makes itself known and read of all men.

We were impressed with this truth a few years since on hearing the testimony of a wealthy New York merchant at a union meeting. He said that when he first came to the city, a boy, he used to see a demure-looking gentleman about the streets, whose appearance indicated that he was a remarkable character, and he often wondered who he was, and what his business. Seeing him one Sabbath on the street, and being at leisure, "I followed him," said he, "determined to find out something more about *his* associations. After quite a walk he came into this church, and going near the altar knelt down. I took a back seat. At length the services commenced, and many spoke of their

delight in the Lord, telling what religion had done for them, and *he* among others. It was an interesting meeting, and I felt that the religion there represented was just what I needed. An invitation being given for sinners to come forward for prayers I accepted it, and soon after found peace in believing, and joined the Church. I have been absent from it for many years, but I have come back to tell you that I am still walking in the way upon which I then entered through the pious influence of that good man."

It was in view of the personal influence of a right Christian life that Charles Wesley wrote:—

"I must the fair example set;
From those that on my pleasure wait
The stumbling-block remove;
Their duty by my life explain,
And still in all my works maintain
The *dignity* of love."

CHAPTER VI.

RELIGION DEMONSTRABLE BY EXPERIMENT.

THE work of saving men will be resisted in every place by more or less objections. You will be called upon to answer many speculative questions, and some practical ones, perhaps, which are beyond your range. But this must not be construed into defeat, or even *weakness*, since any *fool* can ask questions that no wise man can answer. The enemy has been long sowing tares, and they have been cultivated more assiduously than the wheat. Though often pulled up, they again take root and appear in the field in all their original force.

How to treat them depends very much on circumstances. We have never known *debate*, however, to do much good. It is safe to assume, in most cases, that the objector is as sound in sentiment as you are, and that his apparent heresy is

assumed, in self-justification. Even men who claim to be confirmed infidels have religious convictions and fears, which, if followed in a common-sense way, would lead them to the cross. One of this sort lately denied every principle of religion, and claimed to be a free-thinker. But afterward, my friend noticing a weed upon his hat, inquired the occasion of it, and was told with emotion that his wife was dead, and that he had "no doubt she was now in heaven." His last utterance represented his real sentiments more truly than the first.

Years of time have been wasted in trying to convince men who were already sufficiently orthodox in sentiment to justify immediate action. But even where this is not the case, it is better to submit the questions of difference to the *test* of *experiment*, something after the manner of Elijah with the prophets of Baal. By taking a case where God has committed himself to the sinner to pardon and renew on certain specified conditions, we may arrive at conclusions more satisfactory than any that it is possible to reach by *argument*. He is more than willing to be tested in this way.

This was his ancient method, as may be seen from the following case: "Your words have been stout against me, saith the Lord. Ye have said it is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance?" "Ye are cursed with a curse; for ye have *robbed* me, even this whole nation." Yet, bad as they were, he was disposed to give them another chance, and said, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and *prove* me now herewith, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." Mal. iii, 13, 9, 10.

While He may not submit to be tried by any hypothetical case to accommodate the impudent suggestions of men who have no intention to believe in him, all who will *obey* shall "know of the doctrine whether it be of God." This is not the first time that such propositions have been made. The Jews said at the crucifixion, "If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him."

The way to *test* religion is to submit to its terms, and look for the promised results. Sinners are in rebellion against God, neglecting what he requires them to do, and doing what he forbids; and they are often in trouble, fearing that their sins "will find them out." God commands them to "turn from their evil ways," and submit to his government, and promises to accept them. This is done in various forms, so that any common reader of the Bible may understand substantially what is meant, what he is to do, and what to leave undone Isaiah furnishes a good specimen of these commands where he says:—

"Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Isa. lv, 6, 7.

And there are multiplied Scriptures also which indicate the meaning of this, the duties imposed, and the results guaranteed. And, for the encouragement of the sinner, there are others showing

the deepest solicitude on the part of God for the sinner's welfare, and desire that he should accept the terms and be saved, all of which we find beautifully illustrated by the case of the prodigal son. Taking the Bible, therefore, as his guide, and looking to God in prayer for direction, the sinner may expect to experience certain changes in his character and condition of the most satisfactory kind, though he may not fully comprehend their nature and extent.

Then, there is another encouraging circumstance about it, namely, that no man is required to do *better* than he is able. Coming to God according to his best understanding of duty, after making proper inquiry, and in the best spirit of which he is capable, he may expect to succeed, though there shall be much imperfection both in his information and action.

Now, what we propose to the unbeliever, even though he may be an infidel, is to take those plans and practically work them out, to the extent of his ability, and with such helps as may be obtained. He is certainly *safe* in doing so, as they

require nothing *wrong*—no injustice or unkindness, or indecency, and cannot therefore harm him. If they shall prove a *failure*, he can fall back to his old platform, confirmed in unbelief; but if they *succeed*, he will have gained a "hundred fold" of comfort in this world, and "*life everlasting*" in the world to come.

Why is not this a reasonable proposition? We are always testing other things, why not this? A man desiring us to buy certain fruit which he describes, does not attempt to *prove* his description to be true, but says, "*taste* and see for yourself." A mechanic presenting a machine for our acceptance, desires us to *test* it. So the chemist, assuming that certain articles combined in a particular way will produce certain specified results, asks us to experiment upon it. And God asks sinners to "*prove*" him. Let us insist that they do so before passing judgment on a matter which can be determined in no other way.

We knew a young man many years ago who had the common convictions and prejudices of his class, but was so settled in his hostility to certain

popular dogmas in which he had been educated that he refused to hear them, and spent his Sabbaths at home. Being invited to another Church, of whose peculiarities he knew nothing, he heard the announcement of *free salvation* (not bound) to all who would accept it, without any *contradiction* or mental reservation. The preacher vindicated the ways of God with men, and proved very clearly that if men were lost it would be their own fault. The way of salvation was also clearly set forth, and many witnesses testified, that though they were far gone in sin, they *tried* it, and experienced a wonderful transition, changing all their appetites and passions, and making them exceedingly happy in God, so that they would rather be door-keepers "in the house of God, than dwell in the tents of wickedness."

This placed the matter in a new light. But there was one serious difficulty in the way, the young man had no *conviction*, no *capital* to start on. He did not, and could not, *feel* as others said they did before undertaking to be Christians. He *knew* he had sinned greatly, and was in danger of losing

his soul, but could not feel *distressed* about it. But still he *thought* of the matter as he had not for several years, and saw something *very attractive* in the character and experience of certain leading members of the Church, who hourly walked with God, and had the witness in themselves that their ways pleased Him. Indeed, he coveted the *feelings* that would justify an attempt to reach their condition by the processes proposed, but to no purpose. He seemed to himself to be utterly dead, and inferred, therefore, that he was really a *reprobate*, and never to be divinely "called." But he said nothing to any one, and nobody said anything to him, till one evening it occurred to him that it would be a satisfaction to admit to some one that he believed in the *reality* of religion, especially as he had been known to question it. This he did to a pious lady who politely inquired as to his religious condition.

But there was no *conviction*, and no prospect of any, and what could be done, if any thing, was the question. Running before being called was considered *possible*, but not *profitable*. In this dilemma

our friend concluded that his case was nearly hopeless; but as it was his duty to *obey* God, he would begin and do his best, forsaking all sin, as far as possible, and doing every duty, great and small, and would continue on this line till death, so that if he must be lost, he would have the pleasure in hell of knowing that he tried to go to heaven from that hour. This plan of procedure he announced one evening, unsolicited, to a religious acquaintance as they were walking from church, which was about tantamount to proclaiming it upon the housetop. Of course, he was soon invited to do a variety of little things, all new and strange to him, and to his apprehension equally unpromising; and some of them were particularly against his pride and timidity, and sure to incur public and private reproach. But being innocent and *harmless* in themselves, he promptly acquiesced without demur or delay.

He pursued this course for several weeks without one ray of light, praying as well as he could, receiving advice from his friends, and living in all things according to his understanding of the will

of God. But it seemed to him to amount to just *nothing*. In the meantime others sought and found, and there was great joy in many hearts. Had it not been that he had started *for life* without conditions, he would probably have been discouraged. But he plodded on and on, seeming to himself to be getting farther and farther from the desired point.

But one morning early, being alone at his business, the spell was suddenly broken. A strange change came over him, as he thought for the worse. He had had but little *feeling* any way, but now he had *none*. He wanted to be "*weary* and *heavy laden*," that he might find *rest*. If he could only have been awakened as was Saul of Tarsus, or the jailer, for one hour, he could have seen his way through. But with *no* feeling, eating, and sleeping, and working, as if all was right, what could he expect? Now, to have the little *sobriety* he had been nursing for weeks dashed from him in a moment, and nothing heavenly put in its place, what could he think? His advisers told him he was *converted*, but he hushed them,

saying, if that is so, religion was not what he had taken it to be. He would not entertain the thought for a moment, for he wanted to be a *thorough* Christian, or make no profession.

But any change was better than the dead line on which he had been working so long. He did not understand it, but held on his wonted way. That evening a new duty was suggested, and was done according to the programme on which he was acting. And he was about asking what next, when the flood-gates of light and love seemed to be opened, and his soul was overwhelmed with unutterable joy. He arose from his seat and walked the floor in joyous amazement. He praised God from the fullness of his heart, not boisterously, for that was not his style. He went out into the street and looked up into the heavens, every star of which seemed to be praising God. Such a sight he never saw before. Every thing seemed new and beautiful. He had no doubt that God loved him, and that he loved God. His whole nature was wonderfully changed. At a late hour he reluctantly retired, fearing that sleep would break

the charm, but it did not. The next morning was the brightest he had ever seen. Overwhelmed with wonder and unutterable gratitude, he went forth to his business walking and talking with God, feeling and singing:—

"Filled with delight, my raptured soul
Would here no longer stay;
Though Jordan's waves around me roll,
Fearless I'd launch away."

We have stated this case somewhat in detail because it goes to show that sinners with only an intellectual conviction may seek God successfully, and thus come to *know* that religion is a divine reality. They may not have precisely the same experience as this young man. The light may come to them more gradually; but if they persevere they will find it sooner or later, and be completely *satisfied.* When Christ first laid his hands upon the blind man at Bethsaida, he looked up and saw "men as *trees* walking." But on receiving a second touch "he was restored, and saw every man clearly." Mark viii, 23–25.

We have had to do with several other similar

cases, where the parties concerned were entirely hostile to religion, and could not be subdued by argument; but they did venture to test the question by experiment, really believing that they should win; and they did, but in a different way from what they expected. Strange influences intervened, to which they submitted, and were transformed into new creatures.

But it must always be understood at the outset that the experiment shall be *fairly* and *faithfully* tried. That is, that every known condition shall be complied with. We have seen persons who appear to deal fairly, but coming short in their consecration or action at some apparently trifling point, they failed. This often happens in other experiments as well. Listening to a lecture on electricity, we were invited to participate in an experiment demonstrative of the principles declared and explained. The congregation assented, stood up, and joined hands, as required. Directly the shock came, and many of us gave the usual sign of its presence, to the surprise of others, who wondered what was the matter, as they were unaf-

fected. On examination it was found that they had failed to comply with one little condition, namely, to join *naked* hands—they joined hands, but it was with their gloves on. Thus, they not only failed to feel the shock themselves, but they hindered others. As before suggested, if we will *prove* God, we must "bring *all* the tithes into the storehouse."

One of the most striking demonstrations of this sort occurred in New England, under the ministry of an old acquaintance. He was in the midst of a great revival, which was boldly opposed and ridiculed by an influential physician in the place, who claimed to be an Atheist. Waxing warm one evening in his discourse, when he had announced the foregoing principles, he proposed to submit the issue between himself and infidels to the test of *experiment*, agreeing, that if any one would do as *he should direct*, and fail to find religion to be a divine reality, he would renounce the Bible and become an infidel. Then, raising his voice, and looking the troublesome doctor square in the face, he asked, "Does any gentleman accept

my challenge?" Upon this the doctor stepped out into the aisle and answered, "*I* accept it." "Well," said the preacher, "then come forward to the altar," which he did. "Now," said the preacher, "I will state my proposition again, that there may be no misunderstanding between us." Having done so, the doctor assented to it. Every thing being ready, and the thronged assembly in painful anxiety, the preacher demanded of the doctor to kneel down. He did so. "Now," said he, with awful solemnity, "Doctor, call upon GOD ALMIGHTY to have mercy on your soul." The doctor, looking up in his face, replied, "I don't believe there is any such being." "There," said the preacher, "he breaks the contract at the start—he was to do as *I* directed."

But not intending to let him off so easily, he modified the prayer to accommodate his unbelief, saying, "Well, doctor pray this way, 'If there be a God, have mercy on my soul.'" There was no getting away from this, and the doctor commenced and proceeded with perfect deliberation until he reached the *petition*, when he cried at the top of

his voice, and from the *deep* of his heart, "*Have mercy on my soul!*" and went on to pray without further direction. The explanation is, that having reached *just* that point in utter *unconcern*, God sent the spirit of awakening upon him as he did upon Saul of Tarsus. Of course the experiment was a success, and the renewed doctor come to know the doctrine to be of God, and to defend it.

We need more of this kind of *teaching*. *Metaphysics* are too "*thin*," so to speak, to reach the difficulty. We live in a practical, experimental age. Goods are now sold by *sample;* science and arts by *demonstrations*. It is too much to ask people to accept a religion which does *nothing* for them in this world. They are *sinners*, and want to be made *new creatures*, that they may follow their *judgment*, and not their passions and appetites. They are *condemned*, and want to be *pardoned*, not by a priest, but by God himself; and *know* that they are. They are miserable, and desire to be happy. Our religion supplies all these wants, and *satisfies* the soul. And it is the only one that does so. Others *teach* that "all is well," and there is

no reason to *fear*, but give *no* demonstration. We are required to take these propositions *on trust*, and wait for the judgment to determine their character.

Hence it is that so many come to us from other associations, often at the sacrifice of all earthly things. We have known children to be punished and disinherited for doing so, and others to be hunted and persecuted in a most cruel manner, and yet they believed that they had gained much by the change; showing that they were not satisfied before. And many do this especially as they draw near to death, not daring to venture into the spirit-world on a theory that has brought them no virtue or happiness in this.

CHAPTER VII.

POWER WITH GOD AND WITH MEN.

"When one that holds communion with the skies
Has filled his urn where those pure waters rise,
And once more mingles with us meaner things,
'Tis e'en as if an angel shook his wings;
Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide,
That tells us whence these treasures are supplied."

—COWPER.

WHILE there is a marked similarity among Christians, demonstrating the oneness of their spiritual origin and character, there is considerable diversity arising from their constitutional peculiarities, education, and surroundings. Animated by the same general principles and purposes, they are led by different tastes and judgments to different modes of expression and prudential procedure. This underlies all denominational and other affiliations among them, by

which each one has the benefit of employing such methods as he prefers. Up to a certain point, these separate associations are, no doubt, right and useful. But where they are made paramount to fundamental principles, and lead to unbrotherly contention, they become detrimental to the objects they should promote.

But in no one particular do Christians differ more than in spiritual and moral power. Some are weak—very weak, while others are strong. And this is often so where, according to all human calculation, the very opposite should be true. Power seems to be a special endowment for particular ends. The prophet Micah possessed it at one time, at least, when he said, "I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, and judgment, and might, to declare unto Jacob his transgressions, and unto Israel his sin." Chap. iv, 8. "Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people." Acts vi, 8. St. Paul exhorted the Corinthians to "be strong." Jacob had "power with God and with men, and prevailed," under great discouragements.

This power is generally recognized among all classes of active Christians as indispensable to success in bringing men to God. We can hardly enter a Christian church without hearing it urged as a necessary endowment. Nor do we know of any great achievement of this sort where somebody has not been especially favored in this respect?

But the idea that power is to be obtained simply in answer to prayer, without reference to collateral duties, is a prevailing error. God bestows it only as it is needed. "Setting us up in business," with more or less capacity, he says, "now go to work for me; seek the lost, and bring them to my fold;" promising to be with us and help us, as may be necessary. If we attempt nothing, his help will not be required. He gives to those who use what they already possess.

His economy is strikingly illustrated in the case of Jacob, from whose history our heading is quoted. He had greatly sinned in his youth against his brother Esau, and had fled to Haran to save his life. Time and fortune, good and ill,

had brought him to conviction, and he was on his way back to his old home. Esau had become rich and powerful in spite of his misfortunes, and Jacob was afraid that he would mete out to him the punishment he deserved. So, as duty required, he prepared himself to make a full and frank confession of his wrong doings, and to back it with appropriate restitutional presents and humiliating services, and moved forward.

These arrangements cost him a great deal of anxious thought, self-mortification, and money; they were complete—the very best he could make, and seemed likely to conciliate his brother, and secure for himself a friendly reception. But still he was afraid to risk the projected meeting on this basis alone. He wanted God to interpose in his behalf. Hence, he betook himself to prayer, and, the answer not coming at once, he wrestled hard and long, even to the break of day, when he prevailed, and was assured that he had power with God and with men—with Esau, by his thorough measures to conciliate him, and with God, by his persistent prayer for his blessing. His persistencc

sprung from the conviction that every thing with him was at stake, and that his ultimate success depended on his triumph over the "man" with whom he wrestled, whoever he might be. To yield, was to lose all; by holding on, he might save all. The struggle was designed to strengthen him, not to make God willing. He has power with God who fully trusts Him, though he has to struggle with himself or another.

Now if we will have power, we must undertake some good thing beyond our measure—something providentially imposed upon us—and do our utmost in the way of human means to effect it. We must plan just as fully and wisely as we would if we had no expectation of Divine assistance, but at the same time look to God earnestly and confidingly for the needed help. By this process Christians of all ranks, from the highest official down to the lowest private, may accomplish wonders in any sphere they shall be called to act. We do not say that they can convert every one, or even those in whom they are most interested; but they will save somebody, and achieve some good.

This proposition involves two things: first, that our object be of paramount importance; and secondly, that we fully consecrate ourselves to its pursuit. Then we shall be committed to it by our highest interest, and will make every necessary sacrifice for its attainment. Protracted delay or increasing weakness, even to the dislocation of a joint, cannot restrain us, because to yield is death, and to hold fast is our only ground of hope.

But this state of mind and heart lies out of the ordinary course of human thought and feeling. Selfishness is the all-controlling impulse of irreligious men, and stands opposed to every thing which is not in harmony with the carnal mind. To resist this mighty current to the extent of entire abstinence from popular sin, one needs to commit himself against it in advance. How much more does he need to consecrate himself to the work of God before he will seek to reform and save men! Without such commitment every new duty will bring a new struggle, leading to vacillation, if not defeat.

Here is just where most professors stand to-day

—respectably orthodox in sentiment, moral in practice, and formal in religion, but not religiously active in doing good. They go to Church, Sunday-school, and communion, and thus seem to take sides with God; but they go to the theater also, and other places of amusement, in obedience to the spirit of the age, and conduct in many respects very much like common sinners. In these circumstances they are, of course, powerless for any spiritual and efficient work. And they often feel it, and are ashamed of themselves, and pray for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but to little purpose. It is hard work for them to pray or speak in public or private on the great subject, for the reason that their hearts are not spiritually alive, and they know that sinners have little confidence in their sincerity or piety. They have no power either with God or men, and will have none, however they may pray, until they change their attitude toward both.

But let them confess to sinners, before whom they have betrayed Christ, and practically declared that religion is a farce, and ask their for-

giveness, and do about the same thing to the Church, which has been injured by their example, consecrating themselves to God, not to "live better," but to live in all things according to his will, and they will have taken a long step toward the acquisition of this grace. Indeed, measures so humiliating and unnatural will be likely to carry conviction to all hearts that the movement is of God, and produce immediate results for good. But however this may be, it will put new life into their own souls, and give them confidence to invoke Divine aid. Prayer, without these preliminary corrections of an inconsistent life, will avail little; but with them it will bring the soul into new, mysterious power, which no language can describe.

This consecration must be specific, embracing *entire loyalty* to God and devotion to the welfare of men, represented by our frontispiece, wherein the patient ox is seen standing between the *altar* and the *plow*, ready to be yoked into service by the farmer or offered in sacrifice by the priest. Some have erred, we think, at this point. They

have become so enamored with their own personal communion with the Saviour and his most devoted servants, that they have seemed to overlook other interests; and this is not surprising when we consider the preciousness of such fellowship. But we must remember that our mission in this world is not merely to *be* good, but to *do* good; and that the Saviour requires us to "let our light so shine before men that they may see our good works and glorify our Father which is in heaven." Christ came to save sinners, and made this the business of his life. He called his apostles to follow him in this respect — to go into all the world and preach the Gospel for this purpose. His disciples are never more in harmony with him than when they make this their special object of pursuit.

We have known some very *holy* people who seemed to be strangely *inefficient.* They were so occupied with themselves, watching their feelings, and nursing their faith, hope, and other graces, that they had little time or disposition to undertake the difficult work of converting sinners. On the other hand, we have known some, whose com-

munion with God was not so satisfactory, but who were *wonderfully* successful in bringing sinners to Christ. Then, we have known another class fully consecrated to God and to the work of saving men, who have surpassed both of them in the extent of their labors and successes. Being *consciously* right with God, and feeling called in his providence to this line of conduct, they have not only been *valiant*, but *mighty*, to the "pulling down of strongholds."

This consecration should be made *openly* to be lasting and properly effective. It will then commend us to *men*, as well as to God—to a definite position and work, which will necessarily distinguish us from the multitudes, and enlist our pride of character in its support.

Let us look a little further at this subject. Impenitent sinners are "*without strength*," in bondage to sin and Satan; at "enmity against God," "having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, . . . because of the blindness of their heart." They cannot love God, his truth, service, or people; nor are they able to

control themselves, "being led captive by the devil at his will," and by their own depraved appetites and passions. Their condition is *deplorable.* They must have foreign help or perish. It was to furnish this that Christ came into the world, but the world generally "received him not." But as many as "received him, to them *gave he power* to become the *sons of God.*" This is the first *gift of power* the sinner receives beyond instruction, admonition, entreaty, and conviction. And this is imparted on his accepting Christ in his proper character as the Redeemer and only Saviour of sinful men. To them "gave he power;" that is, he enabled them to believe, and constituted them the sons of God, lifting them up out of their former condition of slavery to sin and death, and giving them the heart and position of *sons* in the family of God; something after the manner in which he treated the blind man who came to him asking for sight, he gave him *power to see.*

This is a *high* endowment. Changing the *heart* from the love of sin to the love of God and good-

ness, and the *condition* of the sinner from that of a *rebel* and a *criminal* under guilt and condemnation to *conscious sonship* and *heirship* in the family of his justly offended sovereign, he knows, feels, enjoys, and expects *much above* and *beyond* all his previous thought. He understands the *mighty meaning* of religion as no one can do without it. Its purity, power, and heavenly aspirations, are matters of personal experience; and he *longs* that all should "taste and see that the Lord is good;" and with this passion to save them, and the *delight* he enjoys in his new-born state, he has *power* over them.

As young Christians proceed from this point, being faithful, and seeking every day to "let their light so shine before men" that they accept the proffered grace, they will have *new* experiences of love, and "*power* with God and men." God will sometimes give them *special* endowments for particular undertakings or trials. But if they lose their "*first love*," and relapse into a mere formal profession, they will become weak as death itself. They must maintain the witness in themselves

that they are the children of God, or they can do little to bring others to Christ.

The fact that professing Christians are so lacking in power is attributable to one of two or three causes. 1. They never were clearly and satisfactorily converted, which is probably the case with many. They took up some cross, and did certain things in the right direction, and the brethren "spoke peace to their souls," and they joined the Church before the "*new song*" was put into their mouths, and dropped into the *ruts* of dead members. 2. If they were soundly converted, they have allowed themselves to drift away from their first consecration and love into such complications with the world and sin, that they have little heart for the work. 3. Or, they may have found so much opposition to *live*, *active* measures, that they have deemed it expedient to put their light under a bushel, and try to keep it burning there.

But whatever the *cause* may be, the remedy is that suggested by an ancient king, who prayed, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and

uphold me by thy free Spirit." No one can have any great amount of power without this joy. It insures him *communion* with God, wherein he may "ask what he will," and it shall be done; and a strong hold upon men, who, seeing that he "has *been with Jesus* and learned of him," will be *impressed* by the divine radiance that beams from his beautiful life and spirit.

CHAPTER VIII.

PLEASING MEN FOR THEIR GOOD.

"LET every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification," is one of the methods of usefulness proposed by St. Paul to the Christians at Rome. Rom. xv, 2. His meaning may be fairly inferred from his own practice, as stated to the Corinthians thus: "Though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself *servant* (slave) unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made *all things* to all men, that I might by all means *save some*." 1 Cor. ix, 19–22.

While he would not do *evil* that good might come, he was always ready to waive his own rights, tastes, and convenience, that he might command the confidence and esteem of all classes of men, and thereby secure for himself a more favorable hearing, and *win* them to Christ. This policy, properly understood, is the true one for every Christian.

Religion is more than a theory to be maintained by the force of argument. It is a *spirit* and practice of heavenly birth and character. Unlike the spirit of the world, it is full of mercy and good fruits, and needs to be presented by *example* as well as precept.

Coming to men in love and tenderness, willing to serve them in *every* way consistent with morality and our obligations to God, seeking not our own but *their* good, they will see at once that we are not like other men, and have something to offer that is worthy of attention.

The duty here enjoined relates to all classes and conditions of men; none are excluded. We are to please "*all men*," if possible. Some may

not be pleased, however we may approach them. They are unfortunately constructed, and have a wonderful faculty of misconstruing every attention. Still we must try and not be easily discouraged. It is fair to assume that every one has some tender point, some unguarded door to his heart, that may be entered by ourselves or others whom we may enlist to co-operate with us. Men are not always as bad as they at first appear. They assume false positions for a purpose, perhaps to discourage effort in their behalf. Most Christians did so once. But even when they are *worse* than they seem to be, we should still seek to please them for their good. Some of the brightest lights in the Church of to-day were formerly of this character. Like Saul of Tarsus, they were entirely wrapped up in their own opinions, and hated Christ and his religion with a perfect hatred, but they were conquered and saved.

We knew something of a man of this kind, who gloried in his irreligion. He would neither attend Church nor allow any preacher to visit his house. But one took advantage of his worldliness to

please him and get his confidence. It was altogether an unexpected flank movement, and succeeded.

The case was substantially as follows: The man was a well-to-do farmer, and the minister was a stranger, lately arrived, and who had just commenced his work as pastor. He had been informed of the farmer's position, and planned to take him. Passing along the road one day near where the man was at work, he walked up to the fence and immediately commenced talking about the potatoes he was digging, inquiring as to their kind, quality, etc. The farmer was interested. Soon my friend mounted the fence and took a seat, and as the conversation went on he stepped off on the field side to examine the crop more carefully, and was directly at work digging and picking like the hired men, still talking. After awhile the *horn* blew for dinner, as he expected it would, and every hoe was dropped. "What!" he exclaimed, "is it twelve o'clock? I must hurry up or I shall lose my dinner." "But," said the farmer, who was too much interested in the stranger to be discour-

teous, "suppose you go to the house and take dinner with us? I shall be very glad to have you." Very little urging was necessary. He went and was introduced to the wife and children, who were so charmed by his conversation and kind spirit that they all invited him to come again. He, in turn, invited them to visit him, and come and hear him preach. He told the children, too, about the Sunday-school, and the singing, and assured them of a warm welcome if they would come. The result was the family was so pleased they could not keep away. That man was not the kind of preacher they had heard so much about. They all went and were all gathered into the fold by the Christian strategy of a good minister, who learned human nature in peddling *tin ware*, and knew how to approach people and command their esteem.

The Gospel is for sinners, for all sinners; and it will save to the uttermost all who embrace it in a right way. And it is positively unchristian to exclude any one from our sympathy or faith because of his wickedness. The *worse* the man, the

more specific, and ingenious, and persistent should be our efforts to please him for his good.

But how few Christians have the faith, or maintain the practice, involved in this principle? If a man is an infidel, or a drunkard, or a thief, or otherwise notoriously wicked, he is generally passed by as a hopeless case. It is of no use, we say, "to waste our time on him;" hence we take hold, if at all, of what we deem *easier* cases, such as are found in the Church and Sabbath-school. And there is no end to our efforts to please the children and their friends, though we fear this is not always done "for their good," in the Apostle's sense of the language. Were we to take as much pains to please publicans and sinners as Jesus did, or as much as we do to please the children, with the high and holy purpose of bringing them to the fountain of living waters for salvation, we should see miracles of grace equal to any that ever honored the Christian Church.

This point has impressed us deeply of late in reference to the *Romanists*, particularly of our larger cities. It is an alarming fact that our Prot-

estant Churches are *flying* before them, instead of trying to *convert* them. The old "down-town" fields are being abandoned, and our Church accommodations sold out to *Catholics*, often at half price, in utter despair of success among that people. And what makes the movement especially ridiculous is, that we hear a wail of sympathy from this flying community for Catholic Italy, calling for missionaries to carry the Gospel to these *perishing* people in foreign lands.

We do not object, of course, to sending the Gospel to the Catholics in Europe. It is what they need, and they will receive it in its purity and power if properly presented; but we *protest* against turning our backs upon them here and treating them as *unconvertible reprobates*. If, instead of this, our wealthy Christian people, and others having access to them, would *kindly* and *familiarly* show them the saving power of heart religion, invite them to their churches and *pews*, and thus recognize them as decent people worthy of confidence, they would become interested. They are not the *hardest* people in the

world to convert if rightly treated, and when really converted they make the most faithful and happy Christians. But they cannot bear to have their own religion ridiculed, nor are they attracted by ours as ordinarily manifested.

Mrs. ——, a Baptist lady, with a kind, Christian, motherly heart, talked familiarly with Bridget, her Catholic servant-girl, telling what religion had done for her, and how happy it made her under life's burdens, and she showed by her *sweet* temper and kind spirit that she was all that she claimed. Bridget was affected, because she saw that that was just what she needed, but had not. She was *sour*, *irritable*, *timid*, and sometimes *ugly;* while her mistress was pleasant and patient under all circumstances, and never afraid to die. The good woman told the girl, too, how she obtained this grace and where, and that *every* one might have it who would come to Jesus; that many Catholics had sought and found it, etc.; which only deepened her impressions. At length she invited her to go to church, which she did, and sat with her in her *fine cushioned pew*, like any other lady—not

in a free seat in the gallery. This was repeated, and further appropriate conversations were had, until that girl accepted an invitation, went to the altar for prayers, and found the pearl of great price, to her *unutterable joy*. The effect on her life was remarkable. The lady's husband, a venerable gentleman of the Unitarian persuasion, speaking to the writer of the case soon after, said he "never saw such a change in a human being in his life, and that they had taken her from the kitchen and brought her to their table and fellowship as a daughter."

So much for seeking to *please* a stranger-girl, away from her mother and her country, for her good. O, if all our Christians would imitate this beautiful example, and let the light of a pure and happy experience shine on their Catholic servants in the kitchen and elsewhere, they would soon demonstrate the sin and folly of the course to which we object.

In further encouragement to this duty, it may be said that many of our most devoted Protestants were once Catholics. We have been in the habit

of hearing such speak and pray in social meetings for several years, and none have exceeded them in their apparent *satisfaction* or practical fidelity. Indeed, we have seen several of this class converted within a few months, who seemed *perfectly delighted* with a religion that saves from sinful tempers and habits, and makes *joyful in God*, as Catholicism *does not*. *Fear* is its great power. The fear of the priest and of purgatory are the *ruling* elements in it. Show *Romanists* a religion that takes away fear and makes the soul *happy in God*, and many of them will embrace it as readily as will any people in the world. But this can be best done by presenting beautiful examples of living piety.

"We are to please men," says a distinguished writer, "for their good, not barely for the sake of pleasing them, or pleasing ourselves, much less of pleasing them to their hurt, which is so frequently done by those who do not love their neighbor as themselves. Nor is it only their temporal good which we are to aim at, but what is of infinitely greater consequence, we are to do it for

their *edification*, in such a manner as may conduce to their spiritual and eternal good."

As to the particular means of doing this work each one must judge for himself. It is safe, however, to say, that we are not to do it by *flattery*, *duplicity*, or *deception*. These are all sins of themselves, and are not likely to contribute to edification. Nor are we to *lower* the Gospel standard of doctrine, morality, or spiritual religion, to conciliate the prejudices of the carnal mind. This is often done, and sometimes pleases men, but not for their "good." They see the *plot*, and may accept it for the time being, but so soon as they get ready to prepare for eternity, if they ever do, they will leave, and seek the society of those in whom they have more confidence. But it is to be feared that they will become utterly blinded to the claims of God and a good conscience, and die in sin.

The toleration of *dancing*, and other objectionable amusements in the Church, is another method of seeking to please, which has uniformly proved a failure. The moment a Christian Church resorts

to such expedients, no matter by what name they are called, or how *innocent* and popular they may seem, it is *dead* as a spiritual power. The measure is like that of the Jews, who, from *prudential* considerations, recognized the gods of the heathen around them. If, perchance, it should effect any accessions from the world, they will be without God and without hope, and if called to die, would feel obliged to repent, and come to Christ just as though they had made no profession whatever. A *spiritually* minded man can have no interest in such things. They are utterly insipid. We speak from *experience*, no less than from the Bible, and more than *forty* years' close observation. No one enjoyed these amusements more than the writer; but when he became interested in God, and was born of the Spirit, the love of them left him in a moment, and has never returned. And a conversion which does not revolutionize the tastes and practices of men to this extent, seems to him to be *spurious*. For, "if any man be in Christ, he is a *new creature;* old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2 Cor. v, 17.

If we will please men for their good, we must avoid all such *tempers* and practices as are calculated to *offend*, such as pride, anger, malice, hatred, envy, jealousy, revenge, heresies, "revelings," selfishness, fretfulness, *frivolity*, and every thing that appertains to them. Ordinary men know that these are *sinful*, and they despise them in every body but themselves, especially in professing Christians.

Some people of many excellences commit *sad* mistakes in this respect. They seem so *sour*, *censorious*, and conceited, or so *rough* and *severe*, that they *repel* rather than conciliate. Nobody, saint or sinner, except it may be a few of their own class, is glad to see or hear them. They seem particularly endowed to *displease*, and they often enhance their *offensiveness* by charging their failures to the wickedness of others. Yet they mean well, and might do good with a better spirit and method. But they are so full of *themselves*, they are not *teachable*. They suspect the piety of any one who shall question the propriety of their ways. A few such members in a Church will

disgust more people than twice their number of better ones can conciliate. We desire to ring in the ears of all such the command of St. Paul, "Let every one of us *please* his neighbor for *his good* to edification."

Christians often make themselves *offensive*, rather than pleasing, by being tenacious about *little things*, of no account, when compared with the *great* question. It may be about a few dimes or pennies in business, where there is room for an honest difference of opinion; or some personal indulgence, as the smoking of a segar, or the wearing of a ring, or other common ornament. Going to persuade a sinner to be reconciled to God, or a believer to rise to a higher spiritual state, they at once make a bold strike for *these* things, and talk so rudely as to *offend*, and thus defeat their own ends; whereas they should make no issue on *doubtful* points whatever, or spend any time over them. The first thing to be done in either case is to bring the soul to Christ, and have it regenerated and filled with love to God and man. Then, if you have any suggestions to make,

make them kindly, and they will be respected. But to attempt to fashion men to our peculiar notions before we bring them to Christ, is like hammering iron to conform it to our wishes before we put it into the fire.

But it is not enough to avoid these and kindred errors in seeking to please men for their good; we must possess those qualities which *command* esteem wherever seen. First of all, we must be filled with *love* to every soul of man. Says Mr. Wesley, in his sermon on the subject: "Let love *pant* in your heart, sparkle in your eyes; let it shine in all your actions. Whenever you open your lips, let it be with love, and let there be in your tongue the law of kindness. Your word will then distill as the rain, and as the dew upon the tender herb. . . . Every one that is born of a woman has a claim to your good-will. . . . And let all men know that you desire both their temporal and eternal happiness as sincerely as you do your own.

"*Secondly.* If you would please your neighbor for his good, study to be *lowly* in heart. Be deeply

sensible of your own weaknesses, follies, and imperfections. . . . And let this spirit appear in all you speak or do. Be clothed with humility. . . . Labor to be of a calm, dispassionate temper, gentle toward all men; and let the gentleness of your disposition appear in the whole tenor of your conversation. Remember, likewise, that advice of St. Peter, 'Be merciful'—be *courteous*, be pitiful, be tenderly compassionate to all that are in distress, to all that are under affliction of mind, body, or estate. Weep with them that weep, and give them healing words, if you can do no more. But if you are able to give them actual assistance, let it not be wanting. Be as eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, a husband to the widow, and a father to the fatherless. . . . Be courteous toward all men, whether they are high or low, rich or poor, superior or inferior to you."

A *friend* of great kindness of heart, who desires to make the world better and happier for his being in it, goes out to his business every morning with his eyes wide open to discover opportunities of usefulness. Meeting a neighbor he greets him

with fraternal smiles, and inquires after his welfare. No child or youth escapes his notice. He remembers that he was once a child himself, and desired to be pleasantly recognized by his superiors, and was often passed as unworthy of notice. If riding alone, he soon finds some little traveler who seldom "gets a ride," and tenders the seat by his side, which is joyfully accepted. This gives him an opportunity to ascertain the plans, trials, fears, and hopes of his new friend, and to administer to his benefit as circumstances suggest. Next, perhaps, he encounters a beggar, whose honesty is questionable, but still he gives him a kind and patient hearing, and such advice and other help as he deems appropriate.

The other day we saw him in a car, *weary* and worn, returning from his daily toil. Ladies in silk crowded in after every seat was occupied, but found plenty of gentlemen ready to vacate for their accommodation. One *simpleton* relinquished his seat no less than *four* times, before there was the least necessity for it, except in his own *exquisite gallantry*. At length a poor *working girl*, of

sweet fifteen, entered, bearing a large bundle, but nobody moved. This attracted the attention of our aged friend, and he sprang up, and gave the weary child his seat. It was a beautiful sight, and a just rebuke to others, who had no sympathy for the toiling daughter of some worthy mother. But it was just like him. Following the Master, he makes the *necessities* of his fellow-creatures his opportunity for doing them good. The cry of distress, from whatever source, finds a cheerful response in his noble heart. And he is as good at *reform* as he is at *relief;* and, commanding respect by the latter, he is often successful in the former. If he falls behind others in fascinating speech, he excels them on the whole, being ready for every good work. He aims to do good of all kinds, and in all practicable ways, and is a benediction to society.

His "*one idea*" is to please men for their good, but this gives birth to many others. "The same," says Bate, "as the trunk of a tree is one, but gives life and growth to scores of branches, hundreds and thousands of buds and leaves; just as a great

tradesman has one idea, his trade, but that divides and works out into a thousand ideas of ways and means of promoting his trade."

The conclusion of the whole matter is, that we are to regard all men, however wicked, as objects of God's love, and candidates for heaven; and are to set ourselves to make their acquaintance and "*please*" them by all manner of lawful means for their present and everlasting good. But how many will so neglect these things as to lament when it is too late.

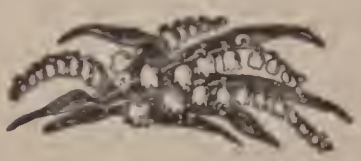
"Alas! I have walked through life,
Too heedless where I trod;
Nay, helping to trample my fellow-worm,
And fill the burial sod;
Forgetting that even the sparrow falls
Not unmarked of God.

"I drank the richest draught,
And ate whatever was good—
Fish, and flesh, and fowl, and fruit,
Supplied my hungry mood;
But I never remembered the wretched ones
That starve for want of food!

"I dressed as the noble dress,
In cloth of silver and gold,
With silk, and satin, and costly furs,
In many an ample fold;
But I never remembered the naked limbs
That froze with winter's cold.

"The wounds I might have healed!
The human sorrow and smart!
And yet it never was in my soul
To play so ill a part;
But evil is wrought by want of thought,
As well as want of heart."

—THOMAS HOOD.



CHAPTER IX.

EARNESTNESS NECESSARY.

SUCCESS in any cause is largely dependent on the *zeal* with which it is undertaken and prosecuted. Christians are generally too dull and cold to awaken interest and fasten conviction. Being engaged in an enterprise of the highest importance, and professing to be divinely moved to action, it is natural to expect that they will be thoroughly *alive* to the work. And if they are *not* so, people are apt to question their sincerity, or the truth of their doctrines.

And this is not unreasonable, because they are known to have been zealous in *sin*, and are now fully engaged in other interests of comparatively little consequence. It is impossible to make people believe that religion occupies the first place in our faith and affections, while we talk of it and press its claims with less enthusiasm

than we manifest in pursuit of money, honor, or pleasure.

The pulpit is strangely defective at this point. The waste of time on mere speculative points, which, however settled, do not perceptibly affect the main question, as well as the *stupid* and *aimless manner* of much of the preaching of the day, is calculated to destroy all confidence in the preacher and his teachings. The *sinfulness* and *danger* of sin, its remedy, and the means of realizing its benefits—subjects vital to the welfare of fallen men—seem to be purposely left out of sight.

"It is a growing complaint," says a late writer, "that, go where you will, it is a rare thing to hear the *Gospel*. Of course, there are some brilliant exceptions; but still it is undeniably true that the preaching of the present day, as a rule, lacks power, and is unawakening to the careless sinner, and unsatisfying to the seeking soul.

"There is plenty of ability and *divinity;* plenty of gnosticism and mysticism; plenty of *neology* and theology. One can point to many a pulpit whence proceed able sermons, eloquent disquisi-

tions, carefully digested essays, and pleasant songs on all sorts of themes—morality, philosophy, the goodness of God, apart from righteousness. Again, there are plenty of evangelical discourses for the children of God, opening up the things of the kingdom. But for the *outsider*, for the sinner, for the seeker, there is a diluted Gospel, muddled grace, chalk mixed with milk, darnings of the rent vail; *any thing* and *every thing* is preached save 'Jesus Christ and him crucified.'

"Now, O objector, bear with me while I point out that you may preach *about* Christ, and not preach CHRIST; you may talk *about* salvation, and yet not proclaim the Gospel of the blessed God—free grace in Christ; and such discourses are most misleading, most tantalizing to an inquirer. He comes to seek bread, and lo! he is taught how to make it; he comes to seek rest in Christ, and he is miraged with a beautiful description of what rest is.

"*Every* sermon should contain in itself sufficient of God's truth to save a soul. Let the subject be what it may, it should comprise a plain and sim-

ple offer of eternal life to the *dead* ones present. Remember that *every* congregation is composed of two classes, the believer and the unbeliever, the saved and the unsaved, the children of God and the children of the devil; and while the people of God desire to be led into sweet pastures by their shepherd, the troubled and the anxious come to find *rest*—to enter into *peace*.

"One Monday morning a minister was informed that a man who, the preceding evening, had listened to his discourse in perfect health, had suddenly been ushered into eternity. His personal responsibility to preach the Gospel as to dying men, as to those who, for aught he knew, might be about to appear at the bar of God, at once flashed upon his mind.

"Rising anxiously from his seat, he proceeded to examine the manuscript of the sermon which the departed soul had last heard, with the intensely earnest hope that he should find in it as much Gospel truth as, had it been then and there, through the grace of God, understood and believed by the departed hearer, would have saved his soul.

To his inexpressible grief, after the examination was over, he found the contrary. He saw that the hearers might have believed every word of that discourse and remained unsaved. The sermon was scriptural and well prepared, lacking nothing save the *Gospel* suited to a dying man.

"Penetrated with a sense of his own unfaithfulness he burst into tears, and, falling down at the mercy-seat, confessed before God, with much contrition, his dread omission; and ere he rose from his knees he made the solemn vow that, with Divine help, to the day of his death, he would never preach a sermon without setting forth as much of the glorious Gospel as would, if truly believed, save any unregenerate soul then present.

"First, be sure to discriminate your hearers. Let them feel that there is a difference—a momentous difference. Provide food, meat, milk for the children, but do not delude the unsaved by letting them think that such things are for them before they have been *born again.* Do not let them hear *Peace!* PEACE! when there is no peace. Let the children depart fed with the bread of

life, but make the unbeliever uneasy; plow the conscience of the formalist, the unconcerned, the self-deceiving; make the anxious more troubled until they find rest in Christ; to the inquiring soul offer Christ in all his fullness, a free gift for his acceptance."

The Rev. Charles Simeon was so impressed with the importance of earnestness in his work, that he used to keep the picture of Henry Martyn, the *famous* missionary, in his study. Move where he would it seemed to follow him with its eyes, and say, "Be *earnest!* be EARNEST!! don't *trifle!* don't TRIFLE!!"

Rowland Hill, defending himself in this particular, exclaimed, "Because I am in *earnest* men call me an *enthusiast.* When I first came into this part of the country I was walking on yonder hill, and saw a gravel pit fall in and bury three human beings alive. I lifted up my voice for help so loud that I was heard in the *town below*, at a distance of near a mile. Help came and rescued two of the sufferers. No one called me an enthusiast *then;* and when I see eternal destruction

ready to fall on poor sinners, and about to entomb them irrecoverably in an eternal mass of woe, and call aloud on them to escape, shall I be called an enthusiast *now?* No, sinner, I am no enthusiast in so doing; and I call on thee aloud to *fly* for refuge to the hope set before thee in the Gospel."

We cannot be *too* earnest or persistent in this momentous work. It involves too much to admit of apathy or discouragement. Says an evangelist:—"At the close of a powerful work in an eastern city, as I was about to leave, a lady of fashion arose in the center of the house, and, with many tears and sobs, made a humble confession, that though a professor of religion, she had lived for *herself* and the *world.* She still remained standing and sobbing. Finally she was able to request prayers for the conversion of her son. He was present. The learned doctor at my side requested me to '*urge* him to rise for prayers.' I did so, but he did not rise. The doctor said, '*Urge more.*' I entreated him again; but he did not rise. The doctor said to me, 'URGE MORE.' Again I persuaded him, and he arose, and was

soon rejoicing in hope. About a week after leaving the place I received a letter, informing me that the lady referred to was dead. Not long after I received another letter, saying that Willie M. was dead. Both died rejoicing in hope. Does any one suppose that I then thought I had urged too much?"

"We are living, we are dwelling
In a grand and awful time;
In an age, on ages telling,
To be living is sublime.

"World's are changing—heaven beholding!
Thou hast but an hour to fight;
Love's pure banner now unfolding,
On—right onward for the fight.

"O! let all the soul within you,
For the truth's sake go abroad!
Strike! let every nerve and sinew
Tell on ages—tell for God."

—A. C. Cox.

We are in earnest in every thing else, why not in this noblest and *grandest* of all employments? Where there is but the merest *trifle* at stake, per-

haps nothing, we lay aside every weight and rush in with our whole souls. How can we be dull and careless here? Charged with such high responsibilities, involving the fortunes of many for two worlds, and, perhaps, in our last opportunity,—

"We have no time to sport away the hours;
All must be earnest in a world like ours.
Not many lives, but only *one*, have we,
One, *only* one;
How sacred should that one life ever be—
That narrow span!
Day after day, filled up with blessed toil,
Hour after hour, still bringing in new spoil."

—BONNER.

But to be in earnest, we must follow our own convictions and tastes. We are differently constituted, and cannot "fire up" to the working point in every enterprise. But he is *poor* indeed who is not interested in something good. One takes to foreign missions, and makes a hobby of them; another to the reform of drunkards; some, to the Sunday-school work, or to the conversion of sinners, or the improvement of believers.

Well, let each one follow his own leanings, get excited, and push forward, helping other interests as he may, but never hindering them.

We are aware this is not in accordance with the feelings of many of the *rulers*. They want Christians to be efficient in *every* thing, and have no *hobbies* or *specialties*, but carry out the order of things which *they* shall advise. But this cannot be so long as men are men, and "our God is marching on." Nehemiah was especially *exercised* about the fallen walls of Jerusalem, and restored them. Peter, at one time, got a good ways ahead of his companions with regard to the *Gentiles*, and it came near disturbing the peace of the Church. *Dorcas* was distinguished by her interest in the poor, for whom she made many "coats and garments."

But these differences, lamentable as they often seem to some, work for the furtherance of the Gospel and the elevation of the race. Little is effected in any cause until somebody gets in *earnest*, and speaks out in a *startling* manner. While the temperance cause received only the attention

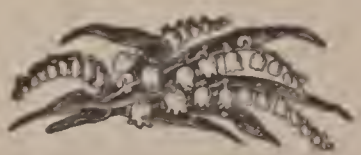
of men in general it went backward every day. But when the eyes of a few were opened to see the *sin* of *moderate drinking*, and denounced it as such, the tide began to turn. So with slavery. It was long known to be "an *evil*," and deeply deprecated; but still spread its baleful influence over the country, corrupting Church and State, until *individuals* saw its *enormity*, and openly assailed it every-where, and by all proper means.

This is substantially the history of all *reforms* and improvements. We say, therefore, let every one be sure he is right, and then work *earnestly* on the line of his strongest convictions. We must have *vital* principles, *burning* words, an *earnest manner*, and unyielding persistence.

"A peasant's family was once seated in their cottage when the thatch on the roof was in flames; and not knowing of the accident, their lives were in danger. A man of *slow* habits, a spinner in speech, went in to them to *explain* the accident, and to *point out* the necessity of providing for their safety. But while he was in the middle of his *long-winded* observations, another man *rushed*

in and cried at the top of his voice, '*Fire!* FIRE!!' when the alarmed family flew out and escaped."

"Thou talk of life, with half thy soul asleep?
Thou, 'living dead man,' let thy spirit leap
Forth to the day, and let the fresh air blow
Through thy soul's shut-up mansion.
Give thy soul air, thy faculties expanse;
Love, joy, even sorrow—yield thyself to all!
They make thy freedom, not thy thrall.
Knock off the shackles which thy spirit bind
To dust and sense, and set at large the mind!
Then move in sympathy with God's great whole,
And be, like man at first, a LIVING SOUL."



CHAPTER X.

THE POWER OF SELF-SACRIFICE.

SACRIFICES are common to all nations, and all religions. They seem to grow out of the prevailing conviction that some atonement is necessary to conciliate the justly offended God. They originated soon after sin, and though superseded by the great sacrifice made by Christ, "once for all," the *feeling* of their necessity is not extinct, nor are we without something of the sort in our penances, fastings, and personal tortures, all of which are gratuitous so far as they mean atonement.

But we do not propose to speak of *sacrifice* in this sense. We have all the *atonement* we need in Jesus, and his work done for us. It is a pity that we should ever doubt its completeness, and seek to atone for ourselves. But we speak of it in another and secondary sense, indicating Christian

duties, as when Paul says, "To do good and to communicate forget not; for with such *sacrifices* God is well pleased." Heb. xiii, 16. And, "I beseech you, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living *sacrifice*, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Rom. xii, 1.

These duties often involve much self-denial and cross-bearing, and are properly enough called *sacrifices*, though they *merit* nothing. As a means of begetting *confidence* and commanding attention, they are too little considered. *Selfishness* being a prominent attribute of depraved human nature, its opposite, *benevolence*, which costs the sacrifice of one's natural inclinations, is readily attributed to heavenly origin. Hence it is, that voluntary and unrewarded service in the cause of God and humanity is often more effective than *professional* service. The regular pastor, called, and well paid, is easily enough suspected of working for *hire*, unless he travels out of his ordinary routine, and undertakes some charitable work not embraced in his contract; while one who comes un-

called, seeking to save the lost, is readily accounted a messenger from God. The people, especially the poor and perverse, cannot understand why men should take so much pains to save them. The sight of such self-sacrificing anxiety in strangers for their welfare arouses their fears and leads them to prayer.

The same principle is manifested in private circles. It is the *hard*, unnatural, *self-denying* work that *wins*. The ordinary Christian life makes little impression. When God required numerous sacrifices of his people, accepting only the *first* and *best* of their flocks and fields, many accounted him a hard master; but when he *gave* his *only* begotten *Son* to die for his enemies, and that Son went about doing good to the least deserving, and at last submitted to *death*, even the death of the *cross*, they saw him in a different light. He, whose fatherly and forgiving heart was thus manifested in the flesh, stands approved wherever known, if not worshiped.

"Kazainak was a robber chieftain in the mountains of Greenland. Coming to a hut where the

missionary was translating the Gospel of John, he wanted to know what he was doing. When the missionary told him how the marks he was making were words, and how a book could speak, he wished to hear what it said. The missionary read the story of Christ's sufferings, when the chief asked, 'Why this? What has this man done? has he robbed any body? has he murdered any body?' 'No,' was the reply; 'he has robbed no one, murdered no one; he has done nothing wrong.' 'Then why does he suffer? why does he die?' 'Listen!' said the missionary. 'This man has done no wrong, but *Kazainak has* done wrong; this man has not robbed one, but Kazainak has robbed *many;* this man has murdered no one, but *Kazainak* has murdered his brother—*Kazainak* has murdered his child. This man suffered, that *Kazainak* might not suffer; died that Kazainak might not die.' 'Tell me that again,' said the astonished chieftain; and the hard-hearted murderer was brought to the foot of the cross."—*Foster's Cyclopedia*, p. 36.

This benevolent principle gives the best Chris-

tian workers much of their *power* over men. Identifying themselves with the wicked for their good, visiting prisons and poorhouses, feeding starving strangers, and offering Jesus to all, at the risk of their reputation and the sacrifice of personal comfort, their enemies feel obliged to acknowledge them sincere, and receive their message.

That the Churches are doing much for the world cannot be denied. Benevolent projects are being started and pushed on all sides. Considerable is being done, too, to instruct and *convert* men to Christ, but these efforts generally fall far short of any marked *self-sacrifice*. Though in the aggregate they are "*much*," it is of the abundance of *money*, *talent*, and *opportunity* possessed, and seldom equals the liberality of the famous widow, who gave all she had.

And how few of the vast multitude of professing Christians make any sacrifice to elevate the spiritual life of the community. In many of our large churches the social meetings are nearly a failure, because the leading members ignore them.

They are tired, and want to enjoy the society of their friends, and have not interest enough to throw the full weight of their influence into the cause. If they would only deny themselves, and take up their cross, and follow Christ, as they did in their "first love," the Churches would become a power in the land. We know a large Church of painful deficiencies in this respect, in which the suggested improvement has been adopted. The result is, the meetings are full and interesting, and many have turned to righteousness. *Money* is a good thing, and may be employed to excellent account; and so is education; but the pressing need of the Church to-day is *five hundred thousand* burning and shining lights in and about our social meetings and public walks, where "others may see their good works."

But there are other duties which require more of sacrifice than these. Speaking and praying in meeting are a real *pleasure* to many, who find it quite embarrassing to speak to people personally about their souls, and press them to immediate repentance. And yet this is often necessary to be

done. Mr. Jones was a fair and easy speaker, and *enjoyed* exercising in public; but it was a real *sacrifice* to him to leave his business, and go *three* miles to persuade an ugly man to repent. Yet he did it, and the man was surprised to see him, and to hear that he came *expressly* for that purpose; and still more so, to see how distressed he was about his soul. The whole thing struck him as something *divine*—something from above—designed to give him one more call to duty, and he surrendered.

A stranger lately floated into a church, and listened to the services, without feeling any unusual impression. He was a man of mature years and strength, and was retiring from the church when a pleasant little woman approached him with kind religious inquiry, and so impressed him that he came again and again, till he found peace in believing. The sacrifice *that* woman had to make to arrest so big a man affected him. He saw that it was not her usual courage that did it, but the Spirit of God and of kindness that inspired her.

"We have read of Leonidas and his brave three hundred men, resisting the Persians at Thermopylæ for the salvation of their country. We have read of the King of the Locrians who, when his son had broken the laws which demanded that both his eyes should be put out, mitigated the punishment by giving, in exchange for one of them, an eye of his own; thus enduring, self-devotedly, a part of the suffering allotted to his child. We have read of the queen who sucked the poison from the wound of the king, her consort, though convinced that death would be the consequence of her heroic act." And we have read of Shapon, whom Dr. Mason asked to go to Burmah as a teacher for *four* rupees per month, instead of *fifteen* he was then receiving as a boatman, who answered, "No, teacher; I could not go for four rupees a month, but I *can do it for Christ.*"

These, and similar instances of self-sacrifice, have commanded the admiration of all nations; and they will never cease to do so. Hence it is that the *self-denying* labors of Christians to do

good to men, are always more influential than those which cost them nothing.

Jesus is our perfect model. "He laid aside the riches of heaven, and became poor for our sakes. For the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, and despised the shame connected with his trying work. He sacrificed ease, worldly comfort, and life even, that he might bring us to God."

His Apostles imitated his example, beginning at Jerusalem, "before the blood of the Master had scarcely cooled on Calvary, or the rent rocks had ceased their throbbings; while the cross still stood in its place, and the taunt of the maddened population—'He saved others, himself he cannot save'—was still lingering in the air."

They knew that to go forth to preach Christ under these circumstances "would be regarded as the rankest *foolishness*, yea, as *insanity*. It was, indeed, a sublime faith that yielded to the call, considering the time, circumstances, and the seeming impossibility of success. But they were men of the right stamp; and the upper-room baptism

endowed them with superhuman power. With hearts of love and tongues of fire they took the light of life into the thickest of earth's mist and darkness, counting all things but loss compared with the momentous interests involved in their work of faith and labor of love."

St. Paul, though born out of due time, was not behind the very "chiefest" of them. "He forgot *himself* when he went far among the Gentiles. He consecrated his matchless intellect to Christ, and approved himself a minister of God in afflictions, in necessities, in watchings and fastings, in distresses and tumults, in weariness and painfulness, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, in evil report, in stripes above measure, in prisons, in deaths oft. He received of the Jews *five* times forty lashes; thrice was he beaten with rods; once stoned; thrice he suffered shipwreck, a night and a day in the deep; in journeyings often; in perils of water, of robbers, etc., etc., and all *for* Christ, and the salvation of lost men."—*Agency of the Church*, p. 303.

Now, in the presence of such examples of self-

sacrifice, and others of similar character scattered along through the ages, what, it may be asked, is the Church doing to-day for God? Who is being whipped? who cast out? who imprisoned? who killed? Hardly any thing of the sort is to be found through all the world. The Gospel has "free course." The most that we have to fear is a harmless sneer, or idle taunt. And, if we cannot stand these, what claim have we to the Divine approval, or to heaven? Our hope is vain.

If the Church is going to save this world there must be a radical change in her *heart*, *purpose*, and *practice*. There must be more "joy in the Lord," more cross-bearing, more self-denial, more personal effort, more giving to the poor, more prayer, more talk, more work, more self-sacrifice. The world can see clearly enough that we are not in *earnest*—that we are seeking "our *own*," not the things of others.

Many are anxious for improvement. It is being talked about in private circles among the more pious, but they are resisted. Many of the *rulers* want *no* change. They are opposed to

any more activity. The *officials*, in some cases, like the scribes and Pharisees of old, stand right in the way of progress. They want to drag on as they have done, and *rule;* but they cannot. Real earnest Christians will leave them, and seek more congenial quarters and agreeable companions. And, as the walls of partition between the different denominations are getting thinner and lower, they will go where they can get the Gospel in its *simplicity* and *power*, and have the best chance to do good.

It has been a question with some Churches why they are running down. The *fact* is patent to every body acquainted with them. It has been attributed to various causes, but not the right one. *That* is to be found just here—they are run in the interest of a *few leaders*, who have *tastes*, *notions*, and *ambitions* they are not willing to *sacrifice* for the *salvation* of the *masses*. They select able preachers to please *themselves*, and then wonder the people will crowd elsewhere to hear men of half their talent. But they *will*, and there is no help for it.

Some are seeing the evil and hiding themselves, by adopting the true Gospel policy; but others will pass on and perish, though perhaps not until they shall have absorbed other Churches like themselves. But in this living age they cannot survive long, unless they awake to righteousness, and go to work to save the world.

But it need not be so. Vital religion was, probably, never more generally recognized as a *fact* and a *power* than it is now. The world, with all its multiplied honors and amusements, is not *satisfactory*. There is a prevailing faith in God and heaven. The real feeling of the public heart flows out in that direction. It was never easier, perhaps, to convert sinners than now. The Church never had so many facilities for doing it. Never so many able ministers and laymen—so many spacious meeting-houses and Sabbath-school accommodations—so much *money* to meet expenses and hire laborers. All that is lacking is the *heart*, the *will*, *purpose*, and *spirit* of *self-sacrifice* for God and the salvation of men.

CHAPTER XI.

THE JOY OF THE LORD OUR STRENGTH.

JOY is the excitement of pleasurable feelings caused by success, good fortune, the gratification of desire, or by a rational prospect of possessing what we love.—WEBSTER.

When it is moderate, it is called *gladness;* when raised on a sudden to the highest degree, it is then *exultation* or *transport;* when we limit our desires by our possessions, it is *contentment;* when our desires are raised high and yet are accomplished, this is called *satisfaction;* when our joy is derived from some *comical* occasion or amusement, it is *mirth;* when it has so long possessed the mind that it has settled into a temper, we call it *cheerfulness.*—BUCK.

This is natural joy. "The joy of the Lord" is a "fruit of the Spirit" arising from spiritual considerations. It is intimately connected with pure

religion, which "is not meat and drink, but *righteousness*, and *peace*, and *joy* in the Holy Ghost." Rom. xiv, 17. "These things," said Jesus, "have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your *joy* might be full." John xv, 11. It is the result of the conscious pardon of all our sins, and present acceptance with God, and the consequent hope of eternal life. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access . . . into this grace wherein we stand, and *rejoice* in hope of the glory of God." Rom. v, 1, 2.

But it is more than the natural result of conscious safety and prospective good. One who has been under guilt and condemnation, and the fear of punishment, being pardoned and renewed, must feel a considerable sense of relief and gratification; but this, by no means, accounts for the *fullness* of joy which God gives. It "passeth all understanding;" being something which the natural man knoweth not, however wise, excluding all tormenting fear of God, death, and hell, and filling the soul with "*unspeakable*" delight. The

Psalmist understood it when he said, "Blessed (or happy) is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." "The Lord is my strength and my shield, my heart trusteth in him, and I am helped;" therefore my heart *greatly rejoiceth.* "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the *light* of thy countenance. In thy name shall they rejoice *all the day.*" "Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord."

This joy is not limited to outward circumstances of apparent prosperity. Its brightest manifestations are often seen in the greatest *adversity.* The apostles, being beaten, departed from the council, "*rejoicing* that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ." They gloried in *tribulation*, realizing the truth of the master's declaration at the outset, "Blessed (or happy) are ye when men shall hate you; and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil for the Son of man's sake." Even death, the terror of all, is conquered by it. "Yea," says

the Psalmist, "though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they *comfort* me." And this is the common *experience* of all true Christians. The triumph is often so complete that they are constrained to exclaim, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

And we need not go back to Bible times to find witnesses of this joy. They are all around us, throbbing with holy delight, and testifying to its *glorious* power, having their "conversation in heaven, from whence also they look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change their vile bodies that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious body;" and seeking "to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, and to be filled with all the fullness of God."

And this is one of their *familiar* songs:—

"How happy, gracious Lord! are we,
Divinely drawn to follow thee,
Whose hours divided are

Betwixt the mount and multitude:
Our day is spent in doing good,
Our night in praise and prayer.

"With us no melancholy void,
No moment lingers unemploy'd,
Or unimproved below:
Our weariness of life is gone,
Who live to serve our God alone,
And only thee to know.

"The winter's night, and summer's day,
Glide imperceptibly away,—
Too short to sing thy praise;
Too few we find the happy hours,
And haste to join those heavenly powers
In everlasting lays."

And if any wish to know how they reached this divine condition, and the secret of its *pleasure*, they will each answer,—

"Long did I toil, and knew no earthly rest;
Far did I rove, and found no certain home;
At last I sought them in His sheltering breast,
Who spreads his arms and bids the weary come.
With him I found a home, a rest divine;
And I since then am his, and he is mine.

"Yes, He is mine! and naught of earthly things,
Not all the charms of pleasures, wealth, or power,
The fame of heroes, or the pomp of kings,
Could tempt me to forego his love an hour;
'Go, worthless world,' I cry, with all that's thine;
Go! I my Saviour's am, and he is mine.

"The good I have is from his store supplied;
The ill is only what he deems the best;
With him, my Friend, I'm rich with naught beside,
And poor without him, though of all possessed.
Changes may come,—I take, or I resign,—
Content while I am his, and he is mine.

"He stays me falling: lifts me up when down;
Reclaims me wandering; guards from every foe;
Plants on my worthless brow the victor's crown,
Which in return before his feet I throw,
Grieved that I cannot better grace his shrine,
Who deigns to own me his, as he is mine."

H. F. LYTE.

The joy of the Lord is a mighty element of power in doing good for various reasons, a few of which we will mention:—

1. One is, that all men without it are more or

less miserable, and desire to be happy. Pollock says most truthfully of men in general, that

> "Whatever path they take, by hill or vale,
> By night or day, the universal wish,
> The aim, and sole intent, is happiness.
> But, erring from the Heaven-appointed path,
> Strange tracks indeed they make, through barren wastes."

They seek it in glittering toys, in the multiplied scenes of vice, but fail, not to obtain amusement or temporary pleasure, but to find a safe and solid dependence for every earthly condition. It is folly to say that wicked people do not take comfort. They *know* better. The trouble with them is, their comfort is dependent on circumstances which are ever changing. Their own tastes change. What pleases them to-day may not to-morrow. Health, and wealth, and friends, important conditions of success, are not reliable. We may have all of them now, but not always. They leave us, and sickness, poverty, and enemies take their place, and trouble ensues. Or, if perchance they continue for a season, conscience—

'Brings bad actions forth into review,
And like the dread hand-writing on the wall,
Bids late remorse awake at reason's call,
Armed at all points,"

Thus, the pursuit of happiness in sin is comparatively a failure, and men longing for rest anxiously inquire, "Who will show us any good?"

2. The joy of the Lord being presented in beautiful, *living* examples, cannot fail to impress people in this condition as being *just the thing* they need to make them happy. *Formal* religion, consisting in lifeless dogmas and ceremonies, and which is about as worldly out of church as irreligion itself, showing little present advantage over respectable sin, and promising heaven on conditions which do not involve a heavenly character, makes no such impression. It don't fill the bill of human necessities, or commend itself to the *common* sense of mankind.

We speak from experience. Having in our youth the usual convictions of sinners, who are trained to read the Bible and go to church; we were at times immensely anxious, but saw no re-

lief in the religion that was offered in the lives and experiences of its professors. It seemed to be rather a burden than a rest. But going abroad, we chanced to fall under another order of religious doctrine and measures, several particulars of which struck us with great force, but nothing more convincingly than the *joyful* appearance of the people. Religion seemed with them to be a *luxury*, an abiding *benediction;* and the Lord's day and worship a *festivity*, and not a funeral solemnity. And they said it was so, and that they enjoyed the same thing at home, in their fields and shops, in the night-time upon their beds, or *alone* in the forest. God was *with* them and *in* them, and they declared, as a matter of personal experience,

> "Jesus all the day long,
> Is my joy and my song,"

and they attested their sincerity by various unmistakable signs. We saw at once that that style of religion was just adapted to human necessities, because it was equal to every emergency.

While it was not less *loyal* to God, it was more *benevolent*, *genial*, and beneficial to men. And, giving it the attention required according to our understanding and very limited capacity, we found it, through mercy, to be all that it had been represented, and incalculably more. Indeed, it surpassed all our previous thought on the subject, and made the darkest places of life bright with heavenly radiance.

The most natural question for one to ask, on being invited to embrace religion, is, What has it done for you? If this can be answered by the presentation of a *model* life, and a *joyful* heart, the chances are much more favorable for success. Every thing depends on the *sample* shown, as in the sale of goods. In many cases it is repulsive because it involves heavy cost for little profit. In others it is powerfully attractive, being a *rare article* and wonderfully adapted to meet a *felt* necessity.

Here is where the Churches are especially wanting to-day. They need to "*shine*" more—to be more loving and happy—to be manifestly joyful

in God, so that, instead of rummaging over old records for orthodoxy and heresy, they can say in truth, and will say it from sanctified impulse, and undoubting assurance, "My soul is happy in God, glory to his holy name!"

3. The joy of the Lord, with its usual accompaniments, is of itself a Divine endowment for the work of doing good. We are apt to speak to others of what we *feel*, whether it be pleasant or painful. One happy in God is naturally prompted to speak of it. If he has no human hearers, he will speak to his heavenly Father, to the trees, or the stars. To talk of the claims of religion in its *absence*, to people not interested, or it may be, opposed to it, is a great cross. Few have courage to do it, and it is hard work at best. But with a heart *enamored* with its charms, it becomes natural and easy, and often *delightful*. Because we have something to say—something *grand* and *glorious*, something we *feel* and *know* from present experiences—something we intensely desire others to know, and which the Saviour is ready to bestow without money and without price.

One thus inspired can hardly fail to do good. Following his Christian impulses, he will come directly to the point in some loving way, unless misdirected by false and fanatical notions. And being honest, earnest, and well-meaning, he will command attention and respect.

Many good people have erred at this point, in assuming that the joys of salvation are rather for *private* use, and are not to be exhibited before the world. But we deem this to be a capital mistake; they are the most attractive element in the Gospel scheme. Christ came to seek the lost—to save sinners—and invited them to come to him, promising to give them "*rest.*" They want to know what he meant—what that rest is. We may *explain* it, but they will not see it, they *cannot* understand it. But let them see a good specimen, a real live man, who was once *profane*, *skeptical*, intemperate, perhaps, without God and without hope in the world, and *miserable;* but now, by coming to Christ, full of goodness and joy, and they cannot fail to get some just notion of its value to themselves.

The plan prescribed by God through Moses for the cure of the bitten Israelites, was to human apprehension one of the most *preposterous* devices ever commended to public confidence. It was without precedent or philosophy, and was probably rejected with indignation when first proclaimed. But when some, who had tried it and were healed, presented themselves as specimens of its effectiveness, all controversy was at an end. One *fact* is worth a thousand arguments. It was on this principle that the blind man exclaimed to the carping Pharisees, "Why, herein is a marvelous thing, that you know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes." Religion in its *best* practical and experimental phases is the kind to present to infidels, and the most hopeless sinners. No modification of it will meet their necessities.

The idea that religion is a very sad thing, and is to be exhibited to the world in mourning, is of long standing. The Jews entertained it, and often carried it into effect, sometimes to disgust. They seemed to think that *fear* and *trembling* were

their *special* work, even in prosperity, and brought upon themselves this terrible rebuke: "Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with *joyfulness*, and with *gladness* of heart, for the abundance of all things; therefore thou shalt serve thine enemies, which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in wickedness, and in want of all things; and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck until he have destroyed thee." Deut. xxviii, 47, 48.

When Nehemiah called the people together for *thanksgiving*, they fell to *mourning*, with "their faces to the ground." But he corrected their mistake by saying:—

"This day is holy unto the Lord your God; *mourn not* at all, nor weep. . . . Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared. . . . neither be ye *sorry;* for the *joy of the Lord is your strength.* So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day is holy; neither be ye grieved. . . . And there was very great *gladness.*" Neh. viii, 6–17.

A similar state of things is seen now in different denominations. Their public services are more like a *fast* than a thanksgiving, and this is why they "*must* be *short.*" Were they as joyous as an evening party, there would be no hurry to get away. If one happens to rise above the common dead level of the fashion, he is suspected of being a fanatic, and is invited, by *sour looks* if not in so many words, to leave. And this is called worshiping God "*decently* and in order," though there is not a throb of real joy, nor an expression of Christian ecstasy, from one month's end to another.

We don't say that all this is of no value; it is a great deal better than no religion, and these people have many excellences. They are often good to the poor, and liberal contributors to the various benevolences of the day. But we do say, if they should individually get *happy* in God, as some of them were when converted, and let the pure light of a joyful heart shine around them as they may, they would crowd their churches, and become agencies of *great power* in saving lost men.

O that God would open their eyes to see their *high* calling, and use their great talents and opportunities for his glory. One day of life, full of the spirit, would outweigh a dozen in their present unsatisfactory condition.

Besides, a *joyful* religion costs less of wear and tear than that of mere servitude, on the principle that it is easier and more agreeable to be a *son* than a *slave*.

CHAPTER XII.

THE POWER OF PERSUASION.

Knowing the terror of the Lord, we *persuade* men, and being embassadors for Christ, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.—2 Cor. v, 11, 20.

PERSUASION is defined to be "the art of influencing the judgment and passions by arguments or motives. It is different from conviction. Conviction affects the understanding only; persuasion the *will* and practice." In this application it is an appeal to the heart and feelings, to influence men to *act* morally and religiously in accordance with their convictions or judgment of what is right and duty. Men generally know their duty before they do it. The difficulty is, not so much in convincing the understanding, as in moving the *will*. Hence the necessity of *persuasion*, which appeals to the personal interests and feelings of the party to be benefited.

At the present time, and in Christian communities, there is little occasion for argument in defense of religion, or to convince men of their obligations to be religious. There is so much light abroad that the most that needs to be done is to *persuade* them to follow their honest convictions. This is evident from the fact, that in approaching death many are at once anxious to be ready, and betake themselves to the necessary means without prompting or instruction. Even one of the malefactors, whose opportunities had probably been few, was orthodox enough on the cross, notwithstanding the noisy triumph of the crowd, to rebuke his companion, and offer the prayer that brought him assurance of safety.

Much of the preaching and personal effort of the times, therefore, seems to us to be ill-adapted to the end sought. It is addressed rather to the head than the heart, on the false assumption that *instruction* is the grand agency of reform. And ministers are being educated to *explain* and *defend* the Gospel, rather than to *preach* it, and "*persuade* men" to "be reconciled to God." If any venture

to depart from this policy, and appeal to the *hearts* of their hearers with tears, and prayers, and entreaties, that move them to repentance, they are pronounced shallow and sensational.

This indicates the difference between George Whitefield and his intellectual superiors. *They* defended the Gospel, *he* preached it, and *persuaded* men to believe and be saved. They ran their little race of conceit, and sank to oblivion; he shook the world, and still lives! It shows, also, how ministers fresh from the field or shop, without literary preparation, are often more successful than others of the highest culture—they *persuade* men. Also, why laymen who can hardly read a word, but know God and his will from hearing and experience, are often mighty in bringing men to Christ—they *persuade* them. And it shows, too, that if men of eloquence (which is said to be "the *art* of persuasion") would bring all their great power to bear upon this vital point, the Gospel in their hands would become mightily effective.

We do not mean to say that persuasion excludes

instruction; it requires it wherever ignorance lies in the way of success. It may require *defense* too. Starting out with the settled purpose of heart to win a man to God, we are to use all truthful and honest means within our reach to effect it, taking advantage of revelations, providences, experiences, prejudices, and predilections, as the circumstances may require.

Queen Esther was called to persuade the king to revoke a most cruel edict which he had wickedly proclaimed against her people. It was a difficult task, involving great personal danger. She had no right to approach him, unless invited. It was *death* for her to do so. But something must be done. So she called upon her people to unite with her in fasting and prayer for three days. The third day she put on her royal apparel, and stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house: and the king sat upon his throne, and when he saw her, he held out to her the golden scepter, which was the signal for her to enter. This was a great point gained. The king was pleased, and asked, "What

wilt thou, Queen Esther? and what is thy request? it shall be given thee to half of the kingdom."

This would seem to a stranger just the time to strike for the main point, but it was not. She *understood* him, and only asked that he and Haman would come to a banquet that day, which she had prepared for him. He went, and was delighted. Being allowed to ask another favor, she requested him to come to a similar banquet the next day. He did so; and, in the fullness of his gratification, asked again, "What is thy petition, Queen Esther? and it shall be granted thee, even to the half of my kingdom." The right time for definite action had now come. The queen replied, "If I have found favor in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my *life* be given me at my petition, and *my people* at my request; for we are *sold*, *I* and my people, to be *destroyed*, to be *slain*, and to *perish*. But if we had been sold for bondmen, and bondwomen, I had held my tongue." Then the king Ahasuerus answered and said, "*Who* is he, and *where* is he, that durst *presume* in his

heart to do so?" And Esther said, "The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman." Haman was *hung*, and the queen prevailed.

This plan was wisely arranged. The king was honored and gratified; Haman was respected as his position required; the queen's heart was overwhelmed with grief, and her petition was so humble it would seem as though it must have succeeded in any case. But the fasting and prayer disturbed the sleep of the king, and brought the hated Mordecai into such position as to make the dreaded edict *appear* as *wicked* as it was in fact.

Persuading men implies all proper means of influencing them to act as desired, especially such as appeal to the *heart*. We may persuade by the mercies of God, or by his judgments; by the Divine promises and threatenings; by the pleasures of piety or the pains of sin; by the love of wife and children, and the desire for their happiness here and hereafter; or by our own loving solicitude for the welfare of those we seek to influence.

The fact that they are *thought of* and *cared for* by others, has often led men to *radical* reform.

"Rev. H. C. Trumbull, preaching to the inmates of a prison, said, 'that the only difference between him and them was owing to the grace of God.' Afterward, one of the prisoners sent for him, and asked, 'Did you mean what you said about sympathizing with us, and that only the help of God made you differ from us?' Being answered in the affirmative, the prisoner replied, 'I am here for life; but I can stay here more contentedly now that I know that I have a *brother out in the world.*' That prisoner lived so well that he was pardoned. He died in the last year, thanking God for the preacher's words of sympathy."—*Foster's Cyclopedia.*

The thought that nobody *cares* for us is very discouraging. David, in enumerating his troubles, says, "I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: no man cared for my soul." Psa. cxlii, 4. This led him to take refuge in God, because he *knew* him, but it drives others into greater recklessness. They feel that every body is against them, and they have nothing to hope for; therefore they don't much

care what they do, or what may become of them. Assurance from any quarter that they are *loved*, and prayed for, will be to them as cold water to a thirsty soul. It begets confidence and inspires hope.

"A rough-looking man brought his son into school, saying, 'I have brought my boy here, and would like to see if you can do any thing with him. I confess he is more than I can manage. Of all the stubborn boys I know, he is the worst.' One day, as the teacher was passing along by the desks, he laid his hand kindly on his shoulder; but the boy shuddered and shrank from it. 'What is the matter, Henry?' asked the teacher. 'I thought you were going to *strike* me.' 'Why should I strike you?' 'Because I am such a bad boy.' 'Who says you are a bad boy?' 'Father says I am a bad boy, and mother says so, and every one says so.' 'But you are not a bad boy; at least I think so; and you can be as good a boy as any one. Ask God to help you to be good, and you will be sure to succeed.'

"The poor boy's eyes filled with tears. He was

not used to such kind words; and when his teacher left him he thought, 'Can I be a good boy when every one says I am so bad? But *he* did not say I was bad; *he* said I could be a good boy, and I *will* be a good boy.' From that time a marked change was observed in him. He took a great deal of interest in his studies, and made rapid progress. His school-fellows soon learned to love him. He grew up to be a great and good man, and became governor of one of our largest States."—*Foster's Illustrations.*

There are too many well-meaning people in the world like this misguided father. They set up a high standard, for others at least, and fret and scold all who come short of it, without due consideration, charity, or patience, and thus undesignedly do great mischief. It is never wise to approach one, however depraved, in an *unkind* spirit, or with unjust censure. If a man has *ninety-nine* vices and but *one* virtue, it is imprudent to denounce him as *totally* depraved. We can do more for him by recognizing that *one* virtue, and using it for his encouragement. Thus, Paul, in

defending himself before Agrippa, recognized his competence to decide the case, saying, "I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews." And he recognized his *faith* by saying, "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest;" and thus elicited the confession, "Almost thou *persuadest* me to be a Christian."

We see this subject illustrated in our city courts. The heartless *injustice* practiced by some inhuman judges upon poor, helpless creatures brought before them, is enough to *madden* to desperation. Instead of holding every man to be innocent until he is proved guilty, they assume that all are guilty, and treat them as scoundrels on the start. It is a disgrace to the country, and calls for the intervention of vigorous measures.

But, thank God! all judges are not of this sort. Some of them are *gentlemen* and Christians. We had occasion to commend one of this class lately, whose fatherly administration we had watched during the trial of several cases. He told us afterward that he had felt it to be his duty to

treat all with kindness, however guilty, and to do them good, whether condemned or acquitted, if possible, and stated a case in which he sentenced a young man to State prison for five years. In pronouncing the sentence he gave him a little kind advice as to his course in prison, encouraging him to pray and to be good. *Five* years afterward the man called at his office to see him, and said he had just been discharged, and desired very much to go directly home to his friends in the West, but felt *compelled* to come first and thank him for the fatherly advice which he gave him when he sent him to prison. He said further, that though he had been brought up religiously, that was the first word that ever touched his heart; that he carried the advice into effect at once, and soon found peace in believing, and had been a happy man ever since. "O," said the old judge, "that did my heart good."

When our solicitude for men becomes *intense*, it is almost irresistible. Seeing that we *feel* for them, they naturally feel for themselves. A devoted elder, burdened for souls, called one morn-

ing on a skeptic, for whom he had been wrestling in prayer. With deep emotion he said, "Mr. R., I am greatly concerned for your salvation!" and burst into tears. He could say no more, and returned home. "Greatly concerned for my salvation! What does that mean?" said the skeptic to himself. This was a new argument. "Why should the elder be concerned? I am nothing to him." A strange case! So, like a sensible man, he stated the facts to his wife. She advised him to follow the elder home. He did so, concerned for his own salvation. They prayed together, and the skeptic, whom no logic could reach, was happily converted. *Tears* are often more potent than words.

There is altogether too little *feeling* on this subject for effective persuasion, and that little is often concealed to avoid the charge of enthusiasm, when it should be manifested in its *full* power. People who gladly go into *spasms* of excitement on other subjects, seem to think that they must keep perfectly *cool* in religion. The brokers' board, where stocks are bought and sold, is a scene of

the *wildest* excitement, in which the neighborhood participates; and this is accounted reasonable and proper. The same is true of the theater, and other places of popular resort. But a church must be as *quiet* as a tomb, and any thing like active measures in the interests of heart-religion and heaven is called fanaticism. No man can be effective for God until he regards religion to be *paramount* to every thing else.

The Saviour did this, saying, "*One thing* is needful," and commanded that we "seek *first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness," taking no anxious thought for worldly interests. His disciples followed him in this particular, renouncing the opinions and ways of the world, and throwing their whole souls into the work. "Out of much affliction and anguish of heart," says Paul to the Corinthians, "I wrote unto you with *many tears:* not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you." "I *beseech* you," "I *pray* you," "I *entreat* you," were his common modes of expression in persuading men. They are the natural utter-

ances of love and earnest desire, and can hardly fail to make an impression where sincerely used. But they need to come from an *agonized* heart—to be the pleadings of profound solicitude. Blind men can distinguish between the real and the false, between the hollow expressions of the lips and the *wailings* of an anxious heart.

Many take unwearied pains to arrange their *thoughts* for speaking, who leave their *feelings* to arrange themselves. We need to prepare the *heart* as well as the intellect. It is for the want of this that the most beautiful words fall dead. The hearers see that they represent nothing, and are used for show, to conceal the emptiness of the heart.

If Cicero spent many years to perfect himself in the art of speaking effectively, how much more ought Christians to do so who speak to *win souls?* We should consider the peculiarities of the parties to be moved, the best method of approaching them, and the *spirit* necessary to our success. The prodigal son did this, and was all ready, soul, body, and mind, to make the best of his difficult

case with his father. It is well to ponder the subject till we determine what we *ought* to say, and then get the right spirit for saying it the most forcibly, whether we are to speak publicly or privately. But we must never forget our *main* point either in the preparation or execution, namely, to "*persuade* men."

CHAPTER XIII.

HOW TO HELP MINISTERS.

FEW ministers are entirely oblivious of the opinions of men, though many hold them in subordination to God and duty. It is inspiring to them to know that they are loved, and every thing which indicates that is pleasant and helpful, except in a few cases where they are so filled with themselves that it *inflates* them. Frequent prayers of a right character, with kind and encouraging words, are, therefore, beneficial, while unnecessary fault-finding is injurious.

But the object of the present writing is to indicate certain methods of helping ministers to a favorable hearing. Some have sufficient fascination to draw a crowd without any special assistance from others, but they are comparatively few. The majority need help in many ways.

1. They need an inviting *place* to preach. It

may not be large or costly, but it should be *pleasant* and attractive. To put a minister in a dark, cold house, and in a high box of a pulpit, a rod or more from the people, as though he was too *good* or too *bad* to mingle with them, is enough to ruin him. We would say, away with your pulpit altogether, and come down to a platform slightly elevated above the main floor, with a low railing around it: if needed, a small desk on it, with no arrangement for reading sermons, the whole occupying much less room than usual. It is said of Daniel Webster, who was once introduced to a high pulpit to address the people, that walking to the front and looking down, he shook his head and said, "I can *never get my case* up here," and took his stand on the floor below.

Then bring the people as *near* the platform as possible. This will give a *social* aspect to the meeting, which is always inviting. Any preacher can feel more at home, and preach better thus situated, than to be *isolated* in the usual way.

This done, give the man soft light, and plenty of it. The practice of putting stained glass into

the windows to *shut the light out*, and make the house of God appear as much like a tomb as possible, savors of the dark ages, and is more befitting witchcraft than the joyous worship of our heavenly Father. If wicked men were to convene in such darkness during the day they would be justly suspected.

2. If you will help your minister, be present, if at all practicable, at every service. This will, at least, prevent a suspicion that he will certainly have, namely, that you are not pleased, and don't care to hear him, which will unavoidably injure his preaching. Then, he may have prepared his sermon especially for your benefit, to relieve some embarrassment under which he knows you to be laboring. Besides, it is hardly respectful to employ a man to preach, and then go off to hear some one else, or stay at home, unless compelled to do so.

And we will add, take your *children* and *servants* to hear him. The Sabbath-school is a great institution, but if it is going to keep the children from the regular Church services, it may be a question

whether it is a blessing or a curse. Many of our congregations embrace very few children, and when we inquire the reason we are told, "They go to Sunday-school." This is a bad showing. Others, however, embrace nearly the whole, it being demanded of them to go directly from the school to the church, or from the church to the school, as the case may be.

3. But do not stop here; *invite* your neighbors to go, and, if necessary, *urge* them. It will certainly do them no harm, and may do them a great deal of good. It is surprising how deeply interested strangers to the house of God often become, by going and hearing for themselves. Having associated with the enemies of religion, and heard it ridiculed, they have imbibed erroneous notions of Christian people and religious services, and are full of *prejudice.* But on hearing for themselves, and coming in contact with those they have distrusted, they see their mistake. The writer was persuaded to go to a church of which he had heard nothing but evil, and did go, just for once, never intending to repeat his visit. But to his

surprise he heard something new—something that hit a point in which he was interested, and he went again from choice, and continued to go until he found what was worth more to him than all the world.

We have known many to be brought to God in this way, first to the preaching, then to the prayer-meeting, then to the cross. Some of the hardest people of our cities have been taken by the arm and led to the house of God, where their mothers and sisters, and infant innocence, and prayers, have come back afresh to their recollection, and aroused all their old interests in eternal things.

As young people become more and more wicked, they think that *nobody cares* for them. They have no seat in any church, and no acquaintance, and, perhaps, are too proud to go "on charity." Very little excuses keep them from making a change which they often feel to be imperative. But nobody speaks to them on the subject.

Now, if Christian people would take it upon themselves to look after the multitudes thus floating about, and invite them to church, and give

them a good seat, and introduce them to others, and make the house of God interesting to them, they would save many. Loose women and *rum-sellers* make a bold strike, and if possible draw them into their haunts, and often succeed. Christians, with God, and right, and conscience to help them, might win more. These people must have society. They are lonesome—away from their mothers and early associates. If we give them the "*cold shoulder*," they will go with sinners, and become vagabonds.

We should be *as earnest*, at least, to get people to *church*, as we are to get children into the Sunday-school. And if our desire to do good is not sufficient to command the necessary effort, it may be well for the Churches to offer a "prize" to its members, who shall secure the largest number of new attendants upon public worship. We set apart days for prayer and fasting, and for the consideration of special subjects. May it not be well to consecrate particular hours, at least, to getting strangers to the house of God?

Being at a hotel lately in a neighboring State, a

lady called to ask a donation from the landlord for a new organ, and invited him to come to church and hear it. He gave her *ten* dollars, and promised to visit the church, saying that it was the first religious attention he had received during the six months he had been in the place. He and his family have a pew in that church now, and are regular attendants, taking many of their guests with them. The writer, a stranger, attended two or three services, by the same lady's kind invitation, and was introduced to the pastor and several others. If all Christians who have *live*, *practical* pastors, whose preaching is decently interesting, will engage in this work as they ought, the *empty* seats, which curse the pulpit more than mobs, will soon be needed.

4. But this is not enough. You should seek to interest all who come to the house of God, whether of their own accord or by special invitation. The officials of lean congregations should regard themselves as a committee to *shake hands* with all strangers in and about their respective places of worship, beginning a full half hour before the

time of service, assigning them good seats, and inviting them to come again. And, if they will politely inquire where they came from, where they live, and propose friendly relations, their attentions will be appreciated. We have had some experience in this line of procedure, and have seldom found it difficult to fill a church, though the pews were held as private property.

But perhaps we have been fortunate in having good helpers. It should be said of them that they have looked carefully after the *seats*, and have loved to fill them, not excepting their *own*. A Boston official reported at a quarterly meeting that he had occupied his pew but once in *three* months, though he had been present at nearly every service. He was willing to sit on the pulpit stairs, or stand, if strangers would come in and seek the Lord. Times may have altered, but human nature is about the same. It covets *attention*, society, *friendship*, and will generally respond to *kindness*. *Empty* seats *can be filled*. Let the experiment be tried.

5. Pursuing this course you can safely and

profitably *advise* preachers, and they often need advice with regard to many things. They sometimes preach too *long*, forgetting that their hearers are not as free from other duties as themselves. And not unfrequently they discuss *nice points*, in which the people have no interest. The preaching that moves the heart is the kind that fills the pews. Many preachers aim too high. They preach to and for a *few leading minds*, and overlook the masses. This is always bad policy, and will sooner or later disperse any congregation. *Take* the masses and regenerate them for God, and the *few* who would like something a little different will follow. Jesus drew "the *common* people," because he always addressed them in their own language, and on subjects of high personal interest to their souls. The aristocracy were offended, but still pressed to hear him.

Ministers often err in occupying too much time in the social meetings. They seem not to understand human nature, or the grace of God, both of which require recognition and opportunity for expression. They talk and pray till the people

are worn out, and are glad to be rid of them; and yet they wonder why they are not more popular. Let them manage to induce the people to improve most of the time profitably in the social meetings, and they will like them better.

6. You can help the preacher by cultivating religious *sociability* among the people. Not with a few of the most prominent and influential, but with all who come within your reach. It will pay for you to go out of your way to speak to those who are unknown and unnoticed, and bring them forward to enjoy the fellowship of the most pious and active members. Many, by changing their residence, lose their interest in religion for the want of this kind of courtesy. Going among strangers, and being young and modest, they hope to receive attention, and be invited forward and *introduced*, but are entirely overlooked.

One excellent lady attended a large church and Sabbath-school for *two* years without being noticed, when some one "broke the ice," and was surprised to find so capable a woman out of position. And we might name a gentleman and

his wife whom the writer received into the Church, and ticketed to another Church. They presented their letters, and hung around two or three years, entirely unrecognized, and then went to another denomination to find *society*. After they had gone, some one "waked up," and on inquiry found that they had lost a growing man of means, and a most worthy family.

We mention these cases to show the importance of *Christian sociability*. They suggest in part the proper answer to the question, What becomes of all our converts? so often asked. If the few congenial spirits found in most places, who spend so much time in fraternizing with *each other*, would extend their courtesy to *strangers*, they would find plenty of others equal to themselves, who would gladly share their labors and joys.

7. Ministers often need encouragement. They have real or imaginary trials that sometimes weigh them down to the earth, however heroic. St. Paul seemed to be somewhat depressed when on his way to the court of Cesar to be tried for his life. But when he came to Appii Forum,

forty-three miles from Rome, and there met a company of brethren who had come all that distance to meet him, and assure him of their sympathy, "he *thanked God and took courage.*" Though far below him in talents and grace, they knew something important to him that he did not, and were fully interested in his welfare.

Young and *timid* ministers especially need this kind of assistance. The writer will never forget the brotherly words of a good man, privately expressed to him near the close of his first year in the pastorate. They were *inspiring*, but a little too late to produce the best effect. *Scolding* seldom helps any body, but "kind words" are always refreshing."

You should deal *generously* with your minister in regard to his support. He cannot speak for himself on this subject for fear of losing his influence, yet if he don't pay his bills at the stores he will get a bad name in the community. Give him enough to make him easy and comfortable, and pay him *promptly—monthly*, if possible. This is generally *best* for all concerned. Any protracted

delay, especially if attended with complaints of heavy burdens, or *close dealing*, as with a sharper, will hurt his feelings and cripple his energies, where a magnanimous policy would make him happy and efficient.

Be *honest* and *impartial.* Don't run in debt in your excess of kind feelings to enrich one, and *pinch* another to pay it. Liberality is too often applied where it is least needed. "Support the *weak*," is an apostolic injunction. Many a poor minister has gone miles to preach gratuitously for Churches, and been allowed to pay his own expenses. This does not look well, especially where the pastor is in good health, and has been voted leave of absence, and a sufficient sum to pay his bills.

Be *just* in all such matters, if you cannot be generous. A good name is worth *something* to a Church, as well as to an individual.

CHAPTER XIV.

WITNESSING FOR GOD.

THE history of the world is a history of controversy between God and man. God at first asserted his claims, man denied them; whereupon he proved them by miracles and prophecies, so that many believed and became witnesses of the truth, to whom he then looked for his defense and the general establishment of his kingdom among men, saying, "Ye are my witnesses that I am God." Isa. xliii, 12.

Jesus, too, worked miracles in support of his character and mission in the presence of multitudes, some of whom believed and declared what they had seen and heard. Thus Peter said of himself and his fellow-apostles, "We are *witnesses* of all things which He did, both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem." Acts x, 39. Christians of the present day, having accepted the teachings

of the prophets and apostles, and especially of Jesus, and submitted them to the only proper tests, are now witnesses of his power to save; and not that alone, but of the doctrines he taught and the availability of the plan of salvation proposed.

Witnesses in some courts, especially *experts*, may testify to what they *believe*, but generally they are restricted to what they *know*. Christians, making religion a study, are experts on the subject, and are fully authorized to speak of all well-established principles and facts pertaining to it. Indeed, we think they should press them upon public attention, particularly those of the Bible, much more than they do. They are "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2 Tim. iii, 16. This has been demonstrated a thousand times, and is patent in every intelligent Christian community. If Christianity has ever failed of making better society than is found beyond its range, it is in places where its teachings have been monopolized by the few, and *concealed* from the people, under the pretense that "ignorance is the mother of devotion."

Let them have free course, and be properly urged upon any community, and they will produce conviction and reform.

But Christians are not limited to these. God is daily developing experiences of the highest importance, which they ought to seize upon and use to the furtherance of his cause. This is in accordance with the practice of the apostles, who went from place to place reporting what had occurred elsewhere, and writing letters and sending messengers to inform the people of the "grace of God" as displayed in other places. You cannot make too free use of these things. Though they may seem stale to you, they are always *new* to the young, who are every-where in the majority, and are more likely to be interested. Even the old *Bible* facts are as *fresh* to many now, as they were to others fifty years ago, and may be used with as good effect. The aged are apt to forget this, and often use more recent events for the sake of novelty, to the detriment of their object.

Witnesses, however, never testify to so good advantage as when they *know* something exactly

to the point, and tell it in a plain, straightforward way. Such testimony commands attention and produces conviction. Thus David, testifying as to the benefits of prayer and the wonders of Divine grace, gives an interesting passage of his own history, embracing the events connected with his personal change from rebellion to loyalty, from sin to holiness. "I waited patiently," said he, "for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a *new song* in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord." Psa. xl, 1–3.

This is simple and comprehensive, showing the *hopelessness* of his condition without help in the "horrible pit and miry clay," the *method* he adopted for relief, and the result: "He inclined unto me—brought me up—set my feet upon a rock—and put a new song into my mouth, even praise unto our God;" all of which was so perfectly satisfactory that he determined to proclaim

it, fully believing that it would beget alarm in others, and lead them to imitate his example. All who knew David were satisfied that a great change had taken place in his character, and were religiously impressed by his testimony.

Who has not read the testimony of Paul, given to Agrippa, as to his former manner of life, when he was thoroughly opposed to Christ—the means of his awakening and conversion, and its effect upon his views and feelings? It is a most thrilling statement, honestly and calmly made, and a more forcible justification of himself and his religion than he could have produced by any other means. It is not strange that the king exclaimed, "Paul, almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian!" or, that he said to the governor immediately afterward, "This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds." Acts xxvi, 31.

Every Christian has a *personal* experience of his own, substantially agreeing with that of every other Christian, but differing in many of its incidents. Some were moral and orderly, and supposed themselves good enough, though not without

solicitude. Others were *immoral*, and flagrantly wicked; hated religion and religious people, and repudiated their teachings and assumed experiences to be as hypocritical, or, at best, the *fancies* of a disordered brain. A few were learned and skeptical, if not open infidels, and devoted themselves entirely to worldly interests. Many occupied ground differing from all these in some respects, but agreeing with them in rejecting Christ. In the great transition from darkness to light each had something peculiar in his awakening, instructions, and methods, but all came, with more or less indirectness, to the point of complete surrender and trust in God, and obtained new views, feelings, and affections, indicating a *new* heart.

Now these are all matters of experience, and, therefore, of *positive knowledge*. If one was formerly profane, intemperate, dishonest, prayerless, or unhappy, he *knows* it. If he is not so now, he knows *that*, and can give a true account of the time when, and the means by which, this change was effected. He is a competent witness as to

what old things have passed away and what new qualities he has acquired. If he loves God so that he delights to do his will, and obeys him in all things, overcoming temptations and natural proclivities to a different course, he must be conscious of it. And if he is really and intelligently in this condition he is *happy—happy in God—joyful* in present assurance that he is a child of God, and can say from the heart, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope . . . to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." 1 Peter i, 3, 4.

These are all *facts* to which Christians are to witness before the world. They compose the light which is *not* to be "put under a bushel, but on a candlestick," that it may give "light to all that are in the house." And the Master requires you to let it *so shine before men* that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matt. v, 16. You may not be competent to *defend* religion by logical argument, but

you can defend it by testimony. The blind man was no match in debate for the carping Pharisees, but he could testify in truth that "a man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash; and I went and washed, and I received sight." When they objected and said, this man is a sinner, he replied, "Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not; one thing *I know*, that whereas I was blind, *now I see*."

It is hard to overcome *facts*. When a wicked man comes before those who have long known and despised him, and declares "Jesus did the *mighty* work," it *tells*. Or, when the pleasure-seeker, *all radiant* with love, testifies,—

"I sought for bliss in glittering toys,
And ranged the rural scenes of vice;
But never found *substantial joys*,
Until I heard my Saviour's voice;"

it makes an impression that no logic can obliterate. Or, when the poor, unfortunate *widow*, feeble and friendless, subsisting upon the crusts of

charity, which is the best she can do, avows herself *rich* and *happy* in the love of God shed abroad in her heart, and in the hope of a home in heaven, and shows by her purity of life and sweetness of temper that she is really all she professes to be, she does more for religion than a thousand fine-spun arguments.

We say, then, to every Christian, *testify* for Jesus. Tell where he found you, and how you found him, and what he did for you. Tell it to your family, your neighbors and friends, to strangers and *enemies*. Do not *argue*, but tell your experience. Tell it in the church, along the way, while about your business, wherever you can fairly get a hearing. But do not be obtrusive. Never occupy time that belongs to others. "Be *courteous*," not censorious or dogmatical. Speak of what you *feel* and know, rather than of what you *think*. And do not be confined to your *first* experience. Too many have made a good start in religion, but having been neglectful of its duties, have fallen away. They have nothing to say, unless they may occasionally moan,—

"What peaceful hours I once enjoy'd!
How sweet their mem'ry still!
But they have left an aching void
The world can never fill."

Others began well and *stopped*. If they testify, it must be from *memory*. Should memory fail, they would have to be silent. This is the secret of so many *old* experiences in religious meetings. Having but a few moments allotted us, we naturally strike for our brightest points, because these are most interesting to ourselves, and promise the best for the cause. Where there has been no growth in grace, these are found in connection with our "first love."

But the Divine arrangement contemplates *improvement* in every Christian virtue. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Prov. iv, 18. "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more *abundance*." For, saith Jesus, "Every branch in me that beareth . . . fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth *more fruit*. . . . He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth

much fruit." John xv, 2, 5. Peter says to such as have obtained this "precious faith," "giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful." 2 Peter i, 5–8.

Living in this way, the Christian realizes something *new* and delightful to himself every day; something that will do *him* good to *tell*, and be profitable to others to *hear*. He has new *thoughts* and *feelings*. The word of God is to him a *fountain of living waters*. The Spirit witnesses with his spirit that he is a child of God, and often gives him an unutterable *joy* and *delight*, of which no stranger to it can have the least conception, and which no philosophy can explain. His soul is *filled with comfort*, and he can hardly tell why, or how. In this state he is like "wine which hath no vent," and "*will* speak that he may be refreshed." Job xxxii, 19, 20. We have known

many in this condition in all ranks of society, whose testimony for religion is most inspiring. They have enough to say and a heart to say it. And the more they think and speak of it, the more the *fire burns*. Bring the Church into this state of mind, and there will be no lack of witnesses, and good ones, too.

The *manner* of witnessing for God is an important point in this discussion. Thus far we have referred chiefly to *oral* testimony. But to be effective, such testimony must be supported by circumstances going to show that the witness is *honest*, and knows whereof he affirms. A *bad* witness is a damage to any cause, especially that of religion. If one is not decently *moral*, the best he can do at present with any light he may imagine himself to possess is to put it "under a bushel;" in other words, to say but little about it. Sinners are not so blind as to believe him to be really *religious* who is practically immoral. The bad lives of some who witness for Christ are a terrible obstacle to religion in many places.

This testimony is to be supported, too, by a

suitable *bearing;* that is, by a general deportment and *appearance*, embracing temper, dress, associations, pursuits, etc., entirely consistent with the *nature* and *objects* of religion. This impressed the rulers who examined Peter and John more than their *arguments.* For when they saw their "boldness," *fluency*, and *fearlessness* of human power, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they "took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." Acts iv, 13. Witnesses who will be effective must be careful of their words, actions, and the society they keep. Little indiscretions destroy the influence of many good people.

Fidelity to God in private duties is often more effective than *words.* The young man, stopping at a hotel, who knelt at his bedside before retiring to sleep and worshiped, agreeably to his custom at home, achieved a wonderful conversion. A youthful stranger saw him from an opposite corner of the room, and was so impressed that he consecrated himself to Christ then and there, and afterward became an able minister of the Gospel,

and his published works are as "ointment poured forth." Our honored Washington never spoke better for religion than when he knelt in secret prayer before one of his great battles, and threw himself, his suffering country, and his enfeebled and hungry soldiers, upon the compassion of God. Some of his men saw him, and were nerved for the conflict and for *victory*.

Setting yourselves to work for the Master, and the good of your fellow-men—watching for opportunities to testify—you will hardly fail of a chance to speak more or less every day to advantage. We are made to talk, and must talk about something. Sporting men will talk of the races; speculators, of stocks; pleasure seekers, of the theater. If Christians will be as free to speak of religion, and do it from the heart, and in the love of it, they will find willing hearers.

CHAPTER XV.

COURAGE AND INDEPENDENCE.

"THE fear of man bringeth a snare." It is a painful emotion, excited by the apprehension of some evil to one's personal welfare. It has kept many from coming to Christ, has led others to deny him outright, like Peter, and is a principal source of weakness and inefficiency among some sincere Christians. Many ministers have never accomplished *half* they would have done had they early grappled this enemy of their happiness and usefulness and conquered it. For no one can be a whole man for God until he becomes *oblivious* of the opinions of men concerning himself.

The following lines indicate the true *bravery* that is required :—

"Dare to *think*, though others frown ;
Dare in words your thoughts *express ;*
Dare to *rise*, though oft cast down ;
Dare the *wronged* and *scorned* to bless.

"Dare from *custom* to depart;
Dare the priceless pearl possess;
Dare to wear it next your heart;
Dare, when others *curse*, to *bless*.

"Dare *forsake* what you deem *wrong*;
Dare to walk in wisdom's way;
Dare to give where gifts belong;
Dare God's precepts to obey.

"Do what *conscience* says is *right*;
Do what reason says is *best*;
Do with all your mind and might;
Do your *duty* and be *blest*."

Instead of taking this noble stand, the very beginning of a Christian life is generally characterized by a "*dodge*." Most people inquire, "If I come out for Christ what will be thought of me? What will be said? How shall I stand in the esteem of my husband, brothers, friends, and associates?" Overcoming this fear in a measure, and determining to do *something*, there is another "*dodge*" to "get in" as cheaply as possible, to avoid the cross—this criticism or that reproach. And the conflict is not ended when well entered, and fully

persuaded of acceptance with God. There is still a nervous solicitude and trembling over some little duty, and often more dodging, bringing in condemnation and darkness, if not total backsliding. And all on account of "the *fear* of *man*."

Some are *constitutionally* timid, while others are brave. Many are brave to fight for their country who are *cowards* in religion. Peter was a bold, daring sailor, but quailed under the taunts of an unimportant maid, and denied his Master with an oath. But the constitutionally timid are often the *boldest* for Christ, showing that, after all, it is possible to be courageous. Even the *feeble* may be as David, and the house of David as the angel of the Lord.

The right time to overcome "the fear of man" is when we enter upon a religious life—when we forsake all—"brethren, sisters, father, mother, wife, children, homes, lands," reputation, and every thing else that comes into collision with the claims of Christ. We can then say from the heart:—

"Take my soul and body's powers;
Take my mem'ry, mind, and will;
All my goods, and all my hours;
All I know, and all I feel;
All I think, or speak, or do;
Take my heart, but make it *new*."

To reserve any thing, or make any other conditions, will embarrass us and obstruct our course, and the free incoming of God's love, and the outgoing of our power to save others. Or, to *retract* any thing, however small, after we have made this complete consecration, will interrupt the flow of the well of water within us, which Jesus says shall spring "up into everlasting life."

An "embassador" from a foreign court must know that he has the approval of his sovereign, and is supported by him. He can then speak with authority, and insist on the terms of pacification or commerce which he bears. But let him prove unfaithful to his master, and depart from instructions, and his *power* is gone. So the Christian must be *loyal* to God if he will have *courage* to make others so. This point settled, *duty* pre-

vails over all conflicting influences. The cross may be heavy, but he bears it because *God* calls, and he takes all the responsibility. He expects success, because his Master is mighty to save; and he dares to obey, however appearances may indicate defeat.

Now, suppose our Churches were to take this position, planting themselves squarely on the will of God, and feeling his fatherly love flowing through their souls, a current of glory, and lighting up all the dark and lonely places of life, what would be the effect? Who would be *timid?* What would become of our *thin* and *dull* meetings—our religious *metaphysics* and abstractions? our jealousies, envyings, and animosities? They would vanish like the dew before the rising sun. Thus endowed, one would "chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight."

But this can hardly be expected. Few only are in working condition, and to wait for the multitude is to abandon the cause. What, then, is to be done? We answer, let so many as will, engage in the work as opportunity may offer. Concert of

action is desirable, but "*one*" may do something, even "save a soul from death." Nehemiah undertook a great work when he had strong enemies, timid and treacherous friends to overcome, and found "much rubbish" in the way; yet he triumphed and astonished the world.

We knew a Church many years ago which had been much divided by *fanaticism*, family and personal differences, and contentions. It was nearly run down, and was a disgrace to religion and the city where it was located. The new pastor was at once besieged by various parties to the contest to *settle* the difficulties as a necessary step to the conversion of sinners. He inquired into them, and found that they were too complicated and radical to be reached by peaceable measures, and that a rigid disciplinary process would probably annihilate the body. But investigation developed a few individuals who were not involved in any of the difficulties, and seemed in good spiritual condition. With these he consulted, and committed them to progressive measures, ignoring the obstacles which appeared insurmountable, and

pressing religion on its own merits upon the people.

But he had hardly started on this line before one of the trustees, an honest man, but a decided *fanatic*, arose in the Sabbath afternoon congregation and gave him such a boisterous outpouring of censure and ill humor as he had never heard, though he had received something similar once before from the same quarter. A little reflection led to the conclusion that this must be stopped, whatever it might cost; for, though *he* might be patient enough to endure it, the people were not. So he immediately sent a letter to the said trustee, requesting him to take *no* part in any meeting of which he had charge until he should see him. The pastor preached again in the evening to sinners, urging them to come to Christ, though so tried by his afternoon experience he felt that he could never preach again. He had but just closed his sermon, when a young man of a good family walked up the aisle uninvited, weeping, and knelt at the altar for prayers. The pastor opened the way for others, and immediately *fifteen* presented

themselves, mostly young men. *Three* were converted that evening, *eleven* the next, and so the work went on through the week.

The following Monday a protracted meeting commenced, as per previous announcement; but there being no other preacher present, the pastor was obliged to occupy the pulpit himself, and seeing a lady of years and financial influence present, one of the principal parties to a family quarrel about *money*, who had said all manner of hard things of her relatives, and had not spoken to her sister or her family for more than two years, except in *court*, he selected this interesting text for her *special* benefit: "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matt. v, 16.

The sermon, by God's blessing, took effect, as he learned a few days after, when sitting in her sister's parlor. She entered the hall of her own accord, without ringing the bell, and seeing her brother-in-law standing before the fire, rushed to his feet in tears, exclaiming, "O, Daniel! will

you forgive me?" This took all the *fight* out of him, if he had any. She then hastened to the parlor, and threw her arms around the neck of her sister as she sat in her chair, falling upon her knees. The grandmother and children hearing the tumult, gathered in the parlor from all parts of the house, and the conflict was ended by mutual confessions and embraces in *one minute*, and forever.

Thus the work went on, one difficulty after another yielding to the subduing power of grace, and the most hardened and rebellious sinners being converted, some of whom remain to this day honored and influential members of the Church. The silenced trustee endured his bondage for a long time, much to the advantage of the cause, when he and his friends got up a little meeting of their own, where they could *rant* and *rave*, scold and fume, to their hearts' content. This lasted for a time, when the whole thing died out, as such combinations generally do; but the Church still lives.

We mention this to show that if the Church, as

such, will do nothing for God, *one*, *two*, or more, who have a heart for the work, may, nevertheless, convert sinners; also, that the best, perhaps the only, way to healing some difficulties, is to kindle the fires of revival around the contending parties.

But to undertake much under these embarrassing circumstances requires more than *ordinary courage*. There are always enough to say, "*If* the Church would only come up to her duty we should have success." And there are not a few who feel called upon to *berate* and *scold* the Church, and think they do God service. But they err. There is no *faith* in this kind of talk. Its real meaning is, that *because* the Church is not what it ought to be, therefore we can do *nothing*. It is the language of *timidity* and discouragement. It hurts the cause it is intended to help. It is like the talk of Judah to Nehemiah, in which he recounted the difficulties of his enterprise, saying, "The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall. . . . From all places whence ye

shall return unto us they will be upon you." Neh. iv, 10–12. But he met them by saying, to "the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be *not ye afraid of them:* remember the *Lord*, which is great and terrible."

David had a little experience of this kind to contend with. Many felt that the Church was *cast off* and *scattered*, and that there was no help for them in God or man. They were ready to give up in despair, when one of a better spirit, and a man of courage, stood forth heroically, and exclaimed, "Through God we shall do valiantly; for he it is that shall tread down our enemies;" and he did so.

When we are sure that we are *right*, and that God is interested in the work we propose, there is no reason to fear, though every thing may seem to be against us. Our answer to all discouragements should be, "Through God we shall do valiantly." We may safely venture in, "to whip or be whipped," so to speak—to conquer or die.

A preacher who had tried the ministry several years, and had failed, in his own estimation at

least, determined to quit and turn his attention to secular business, and had so informed his Bishop. But while lingering among his brethren a few days, this very text was presented to his attention, with some facts connected with its noble heroism. It impressed him, and he said to himself, "I *can* and WILL succeed," and immediately withdrew his request to be excused from further service. A few months after a brother met him in a western city, and asked him how he did, to which he promptly responded, "*Valiantly*," and then gave him the facts above stated, adding that he was living in glorious success; that he never saw such a time in his life; God had blessed his labors *wonderfully*, and, as a matter of course, his own soul.

And another preacher, much in the same condition, who had his attention called to faith in God leading to valiant action, connected with a Church of little efficiency, went to his Bishop radiant with hope, saying, "I expect, Bishop, that *God* and *I* shall have a great time this year;" and he was not disappointed.

There is *power* in real *courage*. And we do not mean by courage the absence of *fear* and *trembling*, so much as a high and holy *purpose* to do exactly right, whatever trembling it may occasion. Some may never overcome fear, so as not to *feel* it at times. It is constitutional. But they may and ought to bring it into subjection to such a degree that it shall not restrain them from *duty*. This done, they will have real courage. Luther was no more fond of martyrdom than other men; but still, when advised not to go to Worms, where he was almost certain to lose his life, he said he would go, "though every tile in the city were a *devil*." When Shemaiah advised Nehemiah to go into the temple and shut the doors to avoid being slain by his enemies, he answered, "Should such a man as I *flee?* I will not go in." His *courage* saved him from sin and mortification.

A religious life is beset on every side by temptations to fear and vacillation. Pride, and love of approbation, caution us to be *careful* as to *what* we do, and *how* we do it. The devil is always preaching "*prudence*," and carefulness not to dishonor

ourselves or our cause. He suggests, "What if you should undertake and *fail*," or give offense, and incur the reproach of your friends and admirers, or lose your position. Unless one is *courageous* to the extent of complete independence of men and consequences, he will hesitate under the pressure and fall back, or but *half* do what needs to be done thoroughly to be effective. A little opposition will scare him away from any duty, however imperative.

We are often deterred by *false* alarms. Things are not as bad as they seem. We shall not be resisted as we suspect. The defeat we anticipate will prove a *triumph*. The people are often waiting anxiously for the conversation or other measure we dread to attempt. The commander of the British fleet off New London was strongly moved to take the city, but was restrained from doing so by the sight of an old ropewalk, which he mistook for a formidable *fort*.

The writer once found himself pastor of a large and flourishing Church, which had little fancy for modern methods of bringing people to Christ.

They were afraid of him, and he was exceedingly afraid of them, especially of the able and devout ruling fathers. But as he preached to save, he screwed up his courage, and one evening opened the way to inquirers to come to the altar. As he did this he saw in the face of his leading official, standing a few feet from him, evident signs of opposition to the movement. But none came. The next day, calling at the office of the afflicted brother, he remarked, "You did not get any one forward last night it seems." "No," we replied. "Well," said he, "for my part, I was glad of it." "I was sorry," we answered, "so there seems to be a difference between us. Now suppose you tell me why you was *glad*, and I will then tell you *why* I was sorry, and let us compare notes, and see who is right." He did so, and we responded, showing him the philosophy and results of the measure, till he melted under the *facts*, and owned that he was probably in error on the subject. The following Sunday evening we repeated the invitation, and he stood in his place, but with a countenance and tears indicating intense interest. The Church

fell pleasantly into line, and many professed to be converted. *Cowardice* would have led to certain defeat.

Many Churches, by the blessing of God, have been prospered by pastors and a few *friends* resisting the worldly wisdom of respectable, but misguided people.

"True courage is a fixed, not sudden heat;
Is always humble, lives in self-distrust,
And will itself into no danger thrust.
Devote yourself to God, and you will find
God fights the battles of a will resigned.
Love Jesus! love will no base fear endure;
Love Jesus! and of conquest rest secure."

CHAPTER XVI.

SOURCES OF WEAKNESS AND DEFEAT.

WE have thus far considered the elements of strength; those of weakness must not be overlooked: for it is well known that the influence of the best gifts are often neutralized by imperfections of spirit or conduct which seem to be unnecessary, and inconsistent with a sincere purpose to do good.

The common sense of mankind requires that Christians should imitate their Master. "I have given you an example," said he, "that ye should do as I have done to you." They are to be patterns "of good works"—"followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises"—to have their "conversation honest among the Gentiles: that whereas they speak against" them "as evil doers, they may by" their "good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visita-

tion." This is the Divine order, and irreligious people understand it perfectly, however ignorant they may be of their own obligations. Indeed, they are keen sighted to discover the least "*mote*" in a professor's eye, when a "*beam*" in their own seems to escape notice. And they give every defect its full weight, without considering human infirmities, or the temptations involved.

This should lead us to be particularly careful to "abstain from all *appearance* of evil," that our good may not "be evil spoken of." David was deeply impressed with the importance of this when he said, "I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me. I was dumb with silence, I held my peace even from good." Psa. xxxix, 1, 2. But when his affliction, which exposed him to improper speech, was past, and his heart became "*hot*" within him, then he ventured to speak with his "tongue."

This suggests one of our greatest sources of danger. "*Death* and life are in the power of the tongue." Prov. xviii, 21. Though "a little mem-

ber" it "boasteth great things." It "is a *fire*, a world of iniquity. . . . It defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell." James iii, 5, 6. Therefore, we have the apostolic injunctions, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers." Eph. iv, 29. "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear." 1 Peter iii, 15. This is a high attainment, especially for those who love to talk. "If any (such) man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." James iii, 2.

Many injure their influence by speaking *censoriously*, either of the party addressed or of others. Claiming to be patterns of excellence themselves, they seem to feel at liberty to criticise their brethren and neighbors, and judge them with severity, though they are strictly forbidden to do so. The

result is, they create a suspicion and prejudice where they desire to establish confidence and esteem, and thus find it hard to command a hearing, and still harder to make the impression they seek. No one loves to be accused to his face of being as bad as he really is, and especially by one who is not himself without fault. And it is not pleasant to listen to one who is *censuring* others, and sees little or nothing to commend outside of the circle of his friends. Yet many, who claim to be God's *peculiar* people, indulge in this sort of thing to the disgust of those they would convert. If we venture to differ from them in opinion, they call us *heretics*, perhaps *hypocrites;* if we do not indorse their measures, it is because we are wicked. The "*higher life*," so called, has suffered from this source more than its special advocates seem to be aware. Less severity toward opponents would improve its appearance and increase its usefulness.

Conversation of a *light* and *trifling* character is, also, exceedingly damaging. The question at issue between the Christian and others

is one of infinite importance—the question of heaven or hell. The assumption is, that the sinner is in danger of losing his soul; that he has only time to make his calling and election sure, since the Judge may be at the door. His first business is to become reconciled to God. How a Christian, entertaining these views, can spend hours, and even days, in free-and-easy conversation with him on subjects of no importance comparatively, and be jovial and apparently unconcerned, as though there was nothing at stake, is a mystery. He don't understand it, and infers that his condition is not so alarming as is pretended. If he were in danger of immediate death, or any less serious disaster, he knows his friend would not waste his time in this manner, but would rather do his utmost to protect him. The presence of such a professor is an injury to him, counteracting conviction instead of producing it.

But this is a *mild* view of the actual facts in the case. Many professors go much further, and indulge in *fun* and *frivolity* on sober, and even sacred, subjects, in the presence of those they are

commissioned to save. They may not *swear* outright, or indulge in other immorality; but they seem to joke, and frolic, and dance, and play games, as heartily as they ever did, or as common sinners do. They do practically what Peter did in words, when he said, "I know not the man," and immensely injure the cause they should promote. We have no hesitancy in saying that such professors of religion are a *curse* to the cause of Christ. How they can have a face to assume to be Christians at all is a *marvel.* They certainly feel but little interest in the subject, and should they attempt to commend it publicly or privately their inconsistency must embarrass them.

Let it not be inferred from these remarks that we regard religion as a sad and gloomy thing. Far from it. Its tendencies are to *joy*, *gladness*, and hope, and to free and cheerful conversation even with sinners, showing them by the light in our countenance and the rapture of our souls that we have "meat to eat that they know not of," but at the same time are lovingly anxious that they may share it with us. It is our

duty to "rejoice evermore," and standing in conscious acceptance with God, and in "the comforts of the Holy Ghost," as he desires all his children to do, we can hardly help rejoicing with "joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Yet in this happy state we must be sober, almost *sad* at times, on account of others who are out of Christ. Paul felt all this. He was so full of comfort in his sufferings, and then so sorrowful, that some thought him deranged. But he defended himself by saying, "Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God; or whether we be *sober*, it is for your cause." 2 Cor. v, 13. As if he had said, Our joy is from God, and would be perpetual but for you, on whose account we are sometimes sober.

One in this state of mind is inwardly averse to frivolity, and, if properly enlightened, he cannot *trifle* with a good conscience any more than he can lie or swear, because it is strictly forbidden by the word which he takes as his guide. He finds it there written, from the lips of Jesus, that "A good man out of the good treasure of the

heart bringeth forth *good things:* and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth *evil things.* But I say unto you, That *every idle word* that men shall speak, they shall *give account thereof in the day of judgment.* For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned. Matt. xii, 35–37. And he accepts the exposition of these declarations, as it appears in the experience of Paul, wherein he says, "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our *conversation* in the world." 2 Cor. i, 12.

It is not good to live in *jest*, since we must die in earnest.—WHICHCOTE.

Discretion in speech is more than eloquence.—LORD BACON.

We emphasize this point because we regard it as fundamental. *Slander* is a great evil, but trifling speech is more damaging, because more common. It is *every-where.* If our pulpits and Sunday-schools would fight it as they do ignorance and immorality, the Church would have more power

with God and with men. But why should we work ourselves or others up to religious fervor if we are to go out and fritter it all away by trifling conversation? In doing so we imitate the worshipers of Aaron's golden calf, who "rose up early, and offered burnt-offerings, and brought peace-offerings, and sat down to eat and to drink, and *rose up to play*." Exod. xxxii, 6.

No man can be strong in the Lord who shows by frivolous and jocose conversation that he has neither the love nor the fear of God in his heart. He may tell a good experience, but it will be from *memory*, not from present impulse. He may be orthodox in sentiment, but he cannot be impressive.

Impatience under contradiction is another source of weakness and defeat. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." Prov. xvi, 32. Therefore it is commanded to "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice." Eph. iv, 31. "For the wrath of man worketh not the

righteousness of God." James i, 20. Men otherwise strong and efficient have destroyed their influence by losing their temper.

One who cannot control himself will find it impossible to control others. Patient endurance generally *wins*. It is natural to be sensitive to abuse and impertinence; but he who keeps cool and sweet, will show himself *divine*. Workers for God and man must not allow themselves to be angry under any circumstances. There is an old platform of sentiment and practice furnished by St. Paul, which cannot be followed too closely. It reads:—

"Charity—(love)—*suffereth long*, and is *kind;* charity *envieth* not; charity *vaunteth* not itself, is not *puffed up*,

"Doth not behave itself *unseemly*, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, *thinketh* no evil;

"Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

"*Beareth* all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, *endureth* all things. Charity never faileth." 1 Cor. xiii, 4–8.

We were led to think of this subject only yesterday, when a gentleman following a legitimate business called at the office of a Christian of no mean pretensions to solicit his patronage. The introduction was not obtrusive, but courteous, yet it was treated with manifest dislike, as much as to say, "You get out, and never come again." The caller left without a word, but not without our sympathy. Should he ever happen to hear that disagreeable brother commending religion, he will be very likely to leave in disgust. According to our ideas of Christian gentility he was insulted, and without the slightest reason. Had he been a *knave* or a *bore*—but he seemed not to be either —a *kind* declination of his proffers would have ended the matter without inflicting a wound on the feelings of either party. What a pity it is that some pious men find it so hard to be gentlemen among strangers!

Dress, though a little thing in itself, has much to do with one's influence. Some have given it too much importance, and have violated common sense and good taste in determining upon one particu-

lar color or style, and making its adoption almost a condition of salvation. Others have gone to the opposite extreme, and either followed the latest fashions of the world, or some grotesque or *fantastic* arrangement that indicated any thing but a well-balanced mind. It is not uncommon for preachers of the Gospel to dress in a manner to make the impression that they are *fops* or *slovens*, and are catering for a particular kind of patronage. This impression has to be counteracted and overcome before they can exert the influence they naturally would do in a more common and less noticeable attire. It is strange that they don't see this, and restrain a foolish fancy, all their own, that will be sure to embarrass them if indulged.

Looking at the subject in the light of the influence which is to be gained or lost by dress, it is, perhaps, safe to say that we should avoid extremes both in *style* and *expense*. In doing so we shall obey the command, "Be not conformed to this world."

Knowing the gaudiness and extravagance of many in his day, St. Paul ordained "that women

adorn themselves in *modest* apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety, not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works," . . . "even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." "This would lead them," says Dr. Clarke, "to avoid every thing *unbecoming* or *meretricious* in the mode or fashion of their dress. . . . They might follow the *custom* or *costume* of the country as to the *dress itself*, for nothing was ever more becoming than the Grecian *stola*, *catastola*, and *zona;* but they must not imitate the extravagance of those who through *impurity* or *littleness of mind* decked themselves merely to attract the eye of admiration, or set in lying action the tongue of flattery. . . . When either women or men spend much time, cost, or attention on decorating their persons, it affords a painful proof that *within* there is little excellence, and that they are endeavoring to supply the want of *mind* and *moral good* by the feeble and silly aids of dress and ornament. Were religion out of the question, common sense would

say in all these things, 'Be decent, but be *moderate* and *modest*.'"

This view of the subject is generally accepted. One writer says, "Let thy apparel be decent, and suited to the quality of thy place and purse." Another, "In thy apparel avoid singularity, profuseness, and gaudiness. Decency is the half-way between affectation and neglect."

By coarseness or carelessness we expose ourselves to the suspicion of cupidity and meanness, if able to make a better appearance; and by extreme nicety and fashion, to pride and worldliness; and in either case lessen the moral influence we might exert over others for their good by pursuing a more reasonable course. Dress which attracts no attention, or, if any, commands approval as being appropriate to the circumstances, is the best. We should aim at this, and where in doubt, follow what we regard to be the prevailing judgment rather than the suggestions of our own fancy, avoiding every thing about which we have conscientious scruples.

One who will be influential for good must be careful of his *associations*. Men are judged by the

company they keep. It is generally understood that the *new* birth destroys the *old* appetites, passions, and affinities, and leads to new fellowships. "They that are Christ's have *crucified* the flesh with the affections and lusts." Gal. v, 24. The love of the "brethren" is one of the strong proofs of this change. "What fellowship hath *righteousness* with *unrighteousness?* and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? . . . Wherefore come *out* from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." 2 Cor. vi, 14–18.

This being the proper scriptural *status* of Christians with regard to society, their voluntary association with those who practically *reject* Christ indicates that religion, after all, is not a satisfactory portion, and needs the pleasures of sin to make it tolerable. *They* go over to *sinners* instead of bringing *them* to the *Saviour*. While they *profess*

to be spiritually-minded, they show by their associations that "the love of the Father is not in them."

Brother A. was a man of many excellences, and was active in the Church and Sunday-school; but he affiliated politically with the most unprincipled men in the community, advocating and voting for measures that were utterly at variance with common morality. We expressed surprise at his course, and asked an explanation, which he promptly gave in these words, "Politics has nothing to do with religion." Others take similar grounds, but it affords no justification, unless we make religion to consist merely in the observance of certain *ceremonies*, as some seem to do. In this case, the ceremonies being ended, the worshipers may go into a fight, fraud, or profane frolic, as they may feel disposed, without detriment.

But the religion of Christ takes cognizance of every *action*, *word*, and *thought*, in church and out, of whatever nature, and requires that they be conformed to the Bible standard. And irreligious people so understand it, and cannot witness these

inconsistencies without losing confidence in the sincerity of those who practice them. However faulty themselves, they want no admonition or advice from such teachers.

Those, therefore, who desire to save others from the wicked ways and associations of sinners, must first save themselves beyond all reasonable doubt, which cannot be done without coming out from the world. Being consecrated to God by baptism is an impressive ceremony, and gives one a commanding influence over his acquaintances, which he may use for their advantage; but let them see him in the theater, or in the giddy dance, or at the horse race, it all goes for nothing. For, however harmless they may regard these amusements, they know he would not be there if he were "a new creature in Christ," and "old things were passed away."

Many, against whom no gross impropriety of conduct can be justly alleged, curtail their influence by seeming to lack consistency. They are full of zeal for one particular department of effort, and seem to care little about any thing else, from

which it is inferred that they are *not* as good as they might be. Care should be taken to avoid giving any occasion for such an inference. We must not allow ourselves to become so absorbed with spiritual things as to overlook the temporal wants of our families, the Church, or the poor, or forget to pay our honest debts. Nor should we be so occupied with financial duties as to appear oblivious of other interests.

Christians often indulge *prejudices*, perhaps *without* condemnation, believing that they have good reason for doing so. This is injurious to themselves if not to others. A little private conversation with the party suspected will often satisfy them that they have misapprehended the *facts* in the case. The sooner they "go and be reconciled to their brother," the better it will be.

Cases occur, too, where the facts are understood, and *forgiveness* is necessary to a settlement of the difficulty, but is not granted. Churches have sometimes lived along for years in this condition, waiting for somebody to yield. A pastor, well known to the writer, was stationed in one

where *two* leading officials were at *variance*, making every thing unpleasant about them, and hindering the work. All efforts to adjust the matter had proved unavailing, and how to meet the case without doing more hurt than good was still a question. At a Church meeting one evening, the pastor, who was full of expedients for good, invited the whole Church to gather around the altar for singing and prayer. They did so, the unfriendly officials occupying a prominent place as usual. "Now," said the pastor, "let us be united, and to test ourselves, we will rise and repeat the Lord's Prayer *together*. If we can go through that *sincerely* it will be a good beginning." So they arose and commenced, "Our Father, which art in heaven," and proceeded as far as "*forgive* us our debts as we"—when there was a manifest break, the contending parties dropping out. Noticing their embarrassment, the minister proposed that they try it again. They did so, and reached the point requiring *forgiveness*, when they faltered as before. "What!" said the pastor, "can't we go through with this? let us try it once more, and

put our *whole hearts* into it." So they began again, "Our Father, which art in heaven," etc., and as they neared the point of difficulty the eyes of the two officials met, when they approached and embraced each other, and went through with the whole prayer squarely, saying, "forgive us our debts *as we forgive* our debtors." This was an affecting scene, and, amid tears and rejoicings, the war of years was terminated forever.

It is not very embarrassing to confess the sins of others, or even our own, in a general way. Indeed, it is rather pleasant and popular. The Pharisee found it so when he confessed the sins of the publican, and thanked God that himself was not like other men. But to confess our *own* sins in *detail* against men and ask their forgiveness, or to *forgive* those who have wickedly sinned against us, is rather trying work; but where there is good ground for either it is exceedingly profitable. Though it may seem to be ruinous, it is the short road to success.

Some Christians of marked excellences of

character injure their influence by *penuriousness.* They "*abound* in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in their love to the brethren," (2 Cor. viii, 7,) but not in the grace of Christian liberality. They do not like charity sermons or the collections, and have a special aversion to *subscription* papers. It is a constitutional weakness which renders them liable to severe criticism. If they would overcome it, and *abound* in *liberality*, as they do in "*faith* and *utterance*," and some other virtues, they would be nearly *perfect.* And as the Church is rapidly growing in this grace, it is to be hoped that they will yet reach a point where they will *enjoy* giving as well as they now do speaking or praying.

A few defeat their pious aims by unnatural, tumultuous, and unreasonable exercises, whereby they offend good taste, and *repel* rather than *attract.* But there is less of this than formerly, and it may be hoped that the extremely *noisy* and extremely *silent* Christians will compromise, and find the middle ground of sound Christian propriety, and work together "in spirit and in truth."

In a word, dear reader, if you will answer the end of your being, you must so live as not to have "your good evil spoken of." Seeing that you are placed here to *exemplify Christian purity*, "be diligent that you may be found of him in peace, without spot and *blameless*." Then shall you be honored both by God and man. For "he that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; *he shall dwell on high;* his place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure." Isa. xxxiii, 15, 16.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE UNCONVERTED.

"Live while you live," the epicure would say,
"And seize the pleasures of the present day;"
"Live while you live," the sacred preacher cries,
"And give to God each moment as it flies."
Lord, in my views let both united be;
I live in pleasure when I live to thee.

PHILIP DODDRIDGE.

THAT it is the duty of unconverted men to be *honest* in their dealings is not questioned. Nor that they should be *moral* in all respects—kind and benevolent to the sick and poor, showing them such sympathy, and giving them such assistance, as they may be able. Common justice and humanity require this; and it is a pleasure to believe that many discharge the obligation with fidelity. They go further, and, by courtesy toward men, contribute largely to their happiness and

improvement, making themselves a real blessing to society.

These virtues give them great influence. They are respected, and even loved, not only by the beneficiaries of their kindness, but by others who witness it. Their opinions are consulted, and generally approved, so that they largely control public sentiment and practice.

Such people do not sufficiently consider their *spiritual* obligations. Though they make no profession of religion, they *believe* in its general principles, and *know* that they ought to conform to them. Nor do Christians fully appreciate the importance of enlisting such people for Christ, and often leave them out of their plans when they should make a specialty of winning them to God, on account of the influence they might exert upon others.

Religious effort is confined too much to the *middle* classes. Few have grace enough to follow Jesus to the lowest depths of human degradation to rescue the fallen and the lost, or courage enough to approach those whom they regard as

their superiors. This is a great defect. We should sweep the *universe* with our loving endeavors, as Jesus did by his sympathy and atonement. The *world* is ours for God. The *extremes* of society are not to be overlooked, or passed with cold indifference. Human nature is about the same there that we find it elsewhere. God is there, calling, and moving, and dissatisfying men with themselves and their condition, and pointing them to heaven. Christians should second his merciful influences, and let the "*Bride*" say "*Come*," as well as the Spirit.

We have a particular interest in persons above the common level of society for the *good* they can do when once brought into full fellowship with God, and for the reason that they are *neglected* with regard to this subject. Though the minister and others may visit and treat them with marked attention, perhaps put them into office and flatter them, they are not approached and conversed with directly and *familiarly* on the subject of their own spiritual condition. We knew one of this class many years ago, and saw that he

must be won before others could be induced to move. The result of active measures depended on him more than on any other *ten* men within our reach. But he was taciturn, and seemed to be quite unapproachable. The necessity was so great, however, that we mustered courage to make a bold, but kind attack, and selected his own house as the place, and his dinner hour as the time, for it. After much prayer, we met him and stated the situation of affairs as we understood them, and asked him to take a certain step, thus placing himself *openly* at the feet of Jesus.

It is never wise to make new terms for such people, especially *easier* ones. Many have been flattered and spoiled by this means. What we proposed was a thorough renunciation of the world and *entire* consecration to God, and seeing that he was impressed, we insisted on an answer, *yea*, or *nay*, then and there. He confessed that he had been thinking of the subject—that the measure proposed was reasonable, and promised to adopt it, though very crossing. And he did so with admirable effect.

A new impetus was given to a work which many approved, but did not embrace, because of pride and the fear of man. From that hour the current flowed along the line of his business, and among his *employés* until the interest became so intense that his manufactory was formally closed for religious services, and we enjoyed nearly a week of Sabbaths, holding three crowded church services each day, by the means of which many persons were born again and made new creatures in Christ Jesus.

God works by means. Though he had an able board of apostles, they were not sufficient to meet the demands of the times. He needed one more, and called Saul of Tarsus, who, with his *higher* social rank and profound learning, accomplished much beyond the reach of others. So we may now have excellent ministers and efficient members but it is not unusual to find one *unconverted* man in the community who, by following his *real* religious convictions, would achieve grander spiritual results than all of them, however earnest and active.

Entertaining these views, we, nearly *forty* years ago, opened in a singular manner a protracted meeting, suggested by them. A "*four-days*'" meeting had been announced through a Boston paper, to commence on the morning of a given day, and friendly ministers were invited to be present and assist in the services. The hour arrived, and, perhaps, *twenty* persons were assembled in the church, all professing Christians except *four* females, belonging to respectable families; but no minister from abroad was present. The prospect was not very encouraging, and the pastor glanced about to find some *sensitive* chord that might be struck with effect. So, instead of opening the service in the usual way, he expressed his regret that no preacher had come, and that so few had found it convenient to encourage the enterprise; but remarked that, after all, there were *three* or *four* persons in the house who, if they *would*, might make that one of the most successful meetings ever held in the place, and insure the fortunes of the week. This was received with manifest surprise. Who the *mighty* individ-

uals could be, and what they could *do* to produce these marvelous effects, were the all-absorbing questions of every mind. One and another was thought of as, perhaps, the parties intended. After keeping them in suspense for awhile, the pastor said he referred to the *unconverted* individuals present, and showed them what would be the consequence of their coming out *squarely* for God in that first meeting, and letting the news fly through the community that they were seeking the Lord, or had found him to the joy of their souls. He appealed to them to consider what a terrible responsibility rested upon them, and what an opportunity they then had to do good, referring to their long resistance of the Spirit, and the circumstances surrounding them. The appeal was not unavailing—they saw the point, and presented themselves at the altar for prayers.

Thus the meeting was opened, and the result was all that was predicted, and more. The multitudes came, and many were converted. And a few preachers came, but they were hardly needed. The *Lord* was there, and the people gladly closed

their stores and shops to witness his mighty doings. The *third* day a pious Quaker, who had recognized the presence of the Spirit, called the pastor into his store and said, "Neighbor Porter, *thee* is not going to stop these meetings to-morrow, is thee?" "Well," said the pastor, "I don't know; what do you think about it?" "O," said he, "I tell thee, Neighbor Porter, don't stop them. It is a *wonderful* time! The Lord is in the work, and I want to see it go on!"

The next day he called in the pastor again, and inquired, "Neighbor Porter, why don't my girls" (two interesting young ladies) "go forward for prayers?" The pastor replied, "It is not on your account, I am sure. They know your interest in the work, but I am suspicious their good mother has said something that deters them." "Does thee think so?" said he. "Well, come, we will go right into the house and see her." We started off across the street, and were directly in the sitting room. But not finding his wife there he stepped into the hall, and, looking up stairs, called, "*Sally!* SALLY!! come down; Neighbor

Porter is here." The moment she reached the room he said to her, "Neighbor Porter thinks our girls want to go forward for prayers, but are afraid *thee* will not like it." "O law!" she responded, "I only said I thought they could get religion just as well in the *pew*—I don't object." "Well," said he, "all thee has got to do is to *take it right out of the way*, and tell them to go if they want to!"

Though a regular Quaker he was full of the good Spirit, and had the pleasure in a day or two of seeing both daughters happy in God. We should be glad to say much of that dear family, with which we took sweet counsel, but the special objects of this writing will hardly admit of it. We have only alluded to the case to indicate the *power* of the work, which was really started through the agency of three or four unconverted females, who, unexpectedly to themselves and others, opened a protracted meeting by asking the prayers of God's people.

Many are so peculiarly constructed that while they will run great moral and spiritual risks for themselves, they are unwilling to bear any respon-

sibility on the account of others. Men often indulge in doubtful practices in a private way, which they would not countenance publicly because of the bad influence it might have upon their subordinates.

So there is a class of men who have no particular conviction urging them to a religious life, who are moved to immediate action by the consideration of their influence over others. We once urged this argument upon a very decided and strictly moral but irreligious gentleman, who had taken some interest in Church matters on account of his wife, but more, perhaps, with the view of increasing the value of his real estate in the neighborhood. When we pressed religion upon him as a matter of *safety* he was a Universalist, and as a matter of *morality* he was all right. But when we brought him to concede that many under his special influence were steeped in sin, and would not be likely to change without coming to Christ, which we could not induce them to do while he turned his back upon him, he saw the point, and put himself in the attitude of a penitent, without

conviction and without prayer, purely to escape the responsibility of other men's ruin. But while kneeling at the altar the second time, and the last he intended to be there, the Holy Spirit awakened him, and led him to earnest prayer, and to a holy, triumphant, and useful life.

While preaching in Wilbraham, in 1836–37, a large number of students in attendance excited our solicitude. How to save them was the question. We had little opportunity to see them, except on the Sabbath, and were intimately acquainted with but few. We, however, observed one neat, healthy, gentlemanly young man, who seemed, without seeking it, to occupy a prominent place among his associates. If any thing special was to be done, they selected him to lead off. Being so influential, it occurred to us that if we could win him to the Saviour it would naturally lead to the conversion of many others.

Accordingly we prepared two sermons on *personal responsibility*, especially of unconverted people, and preached one in the morning and the other in the afternoon of the same day. The

texts and the sermons have utterly vanished from our recollection; but we remember the plan, and that we opened the evening service on the same line of thought. Dr. Raymond, then a teacher in the school, and others, followed it out. Near the close of the meeting the young man especially aimed at modestly arose and asked if he might say a few words, to which we joyfully assented.

He said in substance that he had listened to the subject of the day with much interest, and felt afraid that he had stood in the way of some of his fellow-students; that he had formerly been more anxious about his soul than of late, but still believed that religion was a divine reality to which they should all give heed; and, inasmuch as some might be neglecting the subject on account of his example, he had made up his mind to take himself out of their way, and seek the Lord as well as he could, though his feelings were not such as he desired, or as he had formerly possessed. He then took off his overcoat and hung it deliberately on the back of the seat before him, and walked slowly and gracefully to the altar, inviting his

companions to accompany him. Some did so, and the scene that followed was most thrilling and profitable.

A considerable number found peace in believing and joined the Church. We soon passed away to other fields, and saw no more of that young man for some thirty years, when, on visiting the North Ohio Conference, he smilingly approached us in the strength of his manhood—Dr. William C. Peirce, Vice-President of Baldwin University.

By taking this course he broke the ranks of the opposition, and set an example that was honorable to follow. Besides, he found peace to his own soul, and is still a leading minister, educator, and legislator in the Church of his early choice, and has never regretted taking the manly step which we have but faintly described.

While, therefore, we seek to do good "unto *all* men," irrespective of their nationality, color, or condition, let us especially seek those who hold the key to the hearts of many whom we cannot affect except through them. This will often re-

quire close study, as the lines of influence are not always apparent. Some are so isolated, it is difficult to see that they are influenced by any body; but they *are*, however they may boast of their independence.

Zaccheus was probably one of this sort, but being led by curiosity to see the stranger who was attracting so much attention, he "climbed up into a sycamore tree" on the line of his travels. "When Jesus came to the place he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zaccheus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house." This was a bold device to win a wicked man, who had no thought of being noticed by so distinguished a personage, much less of having Him for his guest. But it was just the thing for the *man* and the occasion. Zaccheus came down and received him joyfully, glad of such honorable recognition, and of an opportunity to learn something more of his character and cause. The interview was a success. Zaccheus was affected, and thinking *at once* of his bad points, as awakened sinners generally do, he leveled a deadly blow at his own

covetousness, and planted himself on the only true ground. He "*stood*, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the *half* of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him FOURFOLD." Conquering here, every thing else was easy. Jesus recognized his triumph, and exclaimed, "This day is salvation come to this house."

This will do for certain cases, but most people must be reached through their *associations*. We may best save the husband through his wife, the parent through his child, the workman through his employer, the student through his teacher. It is our business to *scan* these associations, and turn them to the best account. The first question of a shrewd business man who wishes to enlist another in his enterprise is, "Who does he know?" "Who does he believe in?" "Who does he consult?" "Who does he *trust?*" This settled, he then moves upon his advisers and friends, and through them secures his point. And this is right in a fair and honorable business, where all parties are to be benefited, and especially in religion,

where an *infinite* advantage is to accrue to the receiver.

But how few are wise and zealous enough to appropriate such opportunities to the best account. We float too much with the current, and confine our religious work too much to Sunday, and yield too readily to the fashion of the times. With all due respect for these things we must think for ourselves, and do good whenever and wherever we can. Following the suggestions of the Spirit and the indications of Providence, we may improve the character and destiny of many. A single *lad* with a trifling outfit, instrumentally fed "about five thousand men, besides women and children," in one day.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DOING GOOD A MEANS OF GRACE.

SELF-LOVE, or the desire of happiness, is natural and *lawful*, like hunger or thirst, so long as it is confined within proper limits, and does not covet the possessions of others, or infringe their just rights. Hence the appeal of the Scriptures to our *hopes* and *fears*, to restrain us from sin and encourage us to holiness. But for this element in our nature the ideas of heaven and hell would be powerless. When this feeling so predominates that we seek our *own* good, real or imaginary, irrespective of the welfare of others, it becomes *selfishness*. The *stronger* it is the better, so long as we love God supremely, and our neighbor as ourselves.

Accordingly the Divine commands are generally accompanied by promises, throwing the *full* strength of self-love in favor of obedience. Thus

the prophet says, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have *mercy upon him*, and to our God, and he will *abundantly pardon*." Coming to Christ is urged by the promise of "*rest*," and forgiving the trespasses of men by the assurance that our heavenly Father will forgive us our trespasses. *Kind* and *benevolent* treatment of others is encouraged by the fullest and strongest promises, as may be seen by the following quotations:—

"Thou shalt surely *give* him, and thine heart shall not be grieved: . . . because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall *bless thee* . . . in *all* that thou puttest thine hand unto." Deut. xv, 10.

"*Blessed* is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will *deliver* him in time of trouble. . . . He shall be blessed upon the earth: . . . the Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness." Psa. xli, 1–3.

"*Give*, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and

running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." Luke vi, 38.

"Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in *no wise* lose his reward." Matt. x, 42.

This reward is to extend even to eternity, for the Saviour has so far revealed the transactions of the final judgment as to declare that,—

"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was a hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. . . . Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Matt. xxv, 34–40.

"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men," (Gal. vi, 10,) "for with such sacrifices God is *well pleased*." Heb. xiii, 16.

In view of these Scriptures, and multitudes of others, we are fully authorized to say that doing good is a legitimate means of grace, and in some sense the condition of salvation. Though *faith* is said to be the only condition, still, where it really exists and is accompanied with proper instruction, it leads one out directly on this line of action. Seeking pardon he will forgive his enemies. Desiring the blessing of God, he will bless others, and hereby place himself in complete subserviency to his Maker and Saviour, not to *merit* salvation, but to show that he accepts its conditions.

We fear that this point has not been sufficiently considered by some of our best teachers. They have pressed the *duty* of repentance, faith, and prayer with sufficient emphasis, but have seemed to assume that nothing is required in the way of doing good until pardon and peace is realized, which is evidently a mistake. The moment one begins to believe and pray, he should begin to *practice* every Christian virtue. We shall never forget the experience of a sainted old minister, who was so fearful that he should be *deceived*, that

after long seeking the Lord with many prayers and tears to little purpose, he gave up in despair of ever being converted, and determined to go to work and *act* as nearly like a Christian as he could, and did so. He had not gone far before God blessed him, and made him one of the brightest lights of his age.

We have lately heard a great deal of prayer in the Churches which seemed to us very much out of place. It was long, and loud, and repetitious, reminding us of the fruitless pleadings of the prophets of Baal for fire. It called for the Holy Ghost to come down and baptize every heart, but there was no satisfactory response. Why not? Because the petitioners were not ready. They were not in position to pray—had not brought "all the tithes" into the store-house. In other words, they had not performed all the conditions of successful prayer, and were trying to persuade God to yield his will to their unreasonable demands. They lacked *obedience*, *consecration*, *confession*, self-denial, or something more beneficent.

An article in the "Christian Register" places the subject in its proper light, as follows:—

"It is one of the spiritual laws of the Creator, more remarkable than the laws of the material world, that the growth of the higher qualities in a man depends almost entirely on what he does for others. It seems as if one had to share a blessing before it became a blessing. It is as with a man who at night carries a lamp shut up in a dark lantern. If he opens it only toward himself, so that no light escapes except what falls on his own eyes, he may be dazzled by the blaze and yet see nothing. It is blank midnight around him. He sees not by the direct, but by the reflected light of his own lamp. He must turn his dark lantern around and let its light shine on other objects, and then, as it is reflected from them to his eye, he begins to see. He may himself now be in darkness, but all has become visible to him.

"Just so the man who has made himself wretched, by trying to please himself, turns round his dark lantern and tries to give light to those sitting in darkness, and—a new miracle on the earth!—he strangely finds himself in the midst of light. The pleasure which he has given to others

is reflected back into his own heart. He gives away a blessing with a kind purpose, and somehow, for the first time, it has become a blessing to himself."

And this reminds us of a singular case directly in point, to the effect, that a worthy official in a Christian Church became so fully impressed with his own short-comings that he fell into the deepest despondency. Neither his own prayers, nor those of his pious pastor and friends, brought any relief. He was in utter darkness, and quite overwhelmed with his prospects. The case was so extraordinary that the pastor invited a neighboring clergyman to go with him to the sufferer's house for consultation and prayer. Taking their seats in the parlor, the poor man entered, and began the sad story of his sins, and struggles for relief, in the most solemn and awful manner. Having reached his climax, though by no means through, the visitor disturbed the solemnity of the occasion by an outburst of laughter, which, of course, broke the thread of the narrative, and called for an explanation, which was simply, that he happened

to think of a *sure remedy*, and was so pleased that he could not control himself. This was extremely satisfactory to all parties, and the prescription was insisted on without further examination, and was substantially as follows :—

"When you rise to-morrow morning eat a good breakfast. After prayers take your market-basket, and go down to the bakery and buy several loaves of bread, and then go out into the narrow streets, and visit the sick and poor, inquiring after their history and condition, and giving them such sympathy and counsel as may be appropriate, commending them to God, and giving them a few loaves. Don't work too hard, but go home to dinner, rest, and then go out again, moving carefully, and sticking to it, as your health will allow, for several days, and if it don't do you good then I am no doctor."

The originality of the prescription, no less than the intelligence and sincerity of its author, commanded for it a ready acceptance, and the meeting closed.

The next morning it was carried into effect in

due form, and the good man went from house to house, sympathizing with the suffering, and blessing them with kind words and *good bread*, till he forgot all about his own troubles, and went home to his anxious family much improved in appearance, declaring his entire confidence in the strange experiment. It was a grand success.

The doubts and fears of professing Christians are not generally without foundation. Many of them do nothing to beget confidence either in themselves or in God. Though they see enough to be done, and often feel moved to undertake it, being timid, and, perhaps, incompetent in their own esteem, they hesitate, until conscience ceases to urge them, when they conclude that they are not called to it. Moses had all these feelings when summoned to take an active part in delivering his brethren from Egyptian bondage, and honestly asked, "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh?" But God encouraged him, saying, "Certainly I will be with thee," and told him what to *say* and *do*, and assured him of success. Still he could not believe, and pleaded his own

incompetence, crying, "O, my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant; but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue." He was *honest* in those convictions, and had he not yielded we should hardly have heard of him. But, taking up his cross—and it was a cross—and going forth to execute the work, he was disappointed to find himself equal to the occasion, and by obedience became a mighty man, and achieved wonders for his nation and the world, and, of course, for *himself*.

The call of many men to the ministry has seemed to them, and often to others, as preposterous as this call seemed to Moses, because of their constitutional timidity, and conscious unfitness for the work. But obeying from sheer *fear* of losing their souls, as many have done, and undertaking the work, they have been surprised at themselves. Their efforts to save others saved them, and lifted them from natural nothingness into royal nobility.

Private Christians have similar experiences. Starting out to follow Christ, they immediately encounter some terrible *cross*, connected with the

welfare of others. If they go round it, they begin to shrink and shrivel, losing confidence in God and in themselves; and they become weaker, so long as they maintain this policy. But if they respond to the calls of duty promptly and faithfully, as they are able, asking Divine assistance, they become stronger in every Christian grace, and will do so to the end of life. The tendency of inaction is to death. An infant body unexercised will never develop into manhood. So a new-born soul must *work* to live and grow. *Young* grace put to active use for the benefit of others will spring with wonderful rapidity into mature life. God is not slack concerning his promises. *He* needs no cultivation. He wants no help from us to be good, and great, and merciful. As he called Moses to deliver Israel from Egyptian bondage, so he calls Christians to deliver their kind from sin and misery. This is their proper work, and if rightly done will lift them into greatness and glory.

Young David was faithful as a shepherd. When a lion and a bear came and took a lamb out of the

flock he pursued them, and rescued it, and when they arose up against him he caught them by the beard and slew them. This was a daring feat that taxed his courage and cost him a struggle, but it did him good. It strengthened his faith, so that when he heard, soon after, the great Goliath of Gath defying the armies of the living God, he believed he could kill him also, and begged the privilege of undertaking it.

This is the order of God in spiritual things: "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." Prov. xi, 24, 25.

"Would'st thou from sorrow find a sweet relief?
Or is thy heart oppress'd with woes untold?
Balm would'st thou gather for corroding grief?
Pour blessings round thee like a shower of gold.
'Tis when the rose is wrapped in many a fold,
Close to its heart the worm is wasting there
Its life and beauty; not when, all unrolled,
Leaf after leaf; its bosom, rich and fair,
Breathes freely its perfumes throughout the ambient air.

"Wake, thou that sleepest in enchanted bowers,
Lest these last years shall haunt thee on the night
When death is waiting for thy numbered hours
To take their swift and everlasting flight;
Wake ere the earth-born charm unnerve thee quite,
And be thy thoughts to work divine address'd:
Do something—do it *soon*—with all thy might;
An angel's wing would droop if long at rest,
And God himself, inactive, were no longer blest."

CARLOS WILCOX.

Doing good is a prolific source of pleasure. It lifts us out of the fetid atmosphere of selfishness into the fellowship of God and angels, and entitles us to the love of our race. And who does not know the pleasure of being loved? Besides, there is great pleasure in seeing others made happy by our efforts.

As we were passing out one morning near the close of August, a young lady informed us of a worthy family, the husband and father of which was an *invalid*, whose goods would be put on the sidewalk on a certain day, unless the September rent should be paid before that time. We suggested to her to take the matter in hand *herself*,

and carry out her own wise suggestions. On returning home the evening of the next day, our house rang with joyous excitement, more than one exclaiming, "*Have you heard the news?* Have you heard the good news?" On answering in the negative, all exploded at once, "The *rent is paid!*" And such an overflow of joy is seldom witnessed. The following letter, received afterward from the young lady, will tell the story:—

"MY DEAR DOCTOR:—In accordance with your suggestion and my own conviction, I at once set about relieving the poor family of which we talked. Presenting the case to a few friends they responded liberally, one gentleman sending me a check for $25, who promised further aid if needed. Having collected my money, I started for the sufferer's house with a glad heart, and finding the wife and mother out in pursuit of work, I paid the rent and inclosed the receipt, with the balance of the money, in an envelope, and gave it to the dear daughter for her mother and left. The mother soon returned, weary, footsore, and utterly dis-

couraged, when the daughter, perceiving her depression, handed her the package, knowing something of its contents. That heavy heart suddenly became light, the tears of sorrow gave way to tears of joy, in which the invalid husband joined, and all seemed to feel that they had been raised to *affluence*, because a home had been secured to them for *another month*, and loaves of bread seemed more than visions. I write this because I know you will be interested, and will join with me to invoke blessings on the kind donors. O! the joy of doing good!

"Yours truly, Q. Y. J."

We have this point still further confirmed by the case of a miserly farmer who had worked hard and long to accumulate a fortune. He was returning home one spring day from delivering a load of hay, when he was overtaken by a severe rain. The only shelter near was a shed-like house where a poor widow had lately died. Stopping his team, he ran to the front door, which was partially protected by boards projecting from the roof.

Getting under them, and standing close to the door, he heard tender voices within, and listened to ascertain what was being said, when he was surprised by the following little prayer:—"Heavenly Father, ma told us before she died that you would take care of us and give us some bread. Now, sister and me are very hungry, and we have no one to help us. Please, heavenly Father, send us some bread." This hit the old man in a tender part; still he might have endured it had the matter ended there, but it did not. When the boy seemed exhausted, and knew not what more to say, a little girl prayed in still more pathetic strains, "O Lord, please send brother and me some bread. Ma said you would, and we are very hungry." This was too much for the miser's heart, hard and selfish as it was. He could stand it no longer, and hurried home. Without saying a word to his wife, he took his *big* basket and went down cellar and filled it with the best eatables he could find, embracing pies, cakes, apples, etc., heaping it up as he did *not* when he sold corn, and hurried back to the door in the

rain, and finding the little sufferers still at prayer, he pushed right in, and set his basket before them, and told them to "stop praying and go to eating," which they were more than willing to do. It was a good time for them, but better for him. They said to each other, "We thought what mother told us was true, but we did not expect the Lord would answer our prayers in this way."

When they were fully satisfied, the old man emptied his basket, and told the dear orphans how to take care of their food, and gave them many kind words, for all of which they thanked him from their inmost hearts. He then went home and informed his wife what he had done, and confessed that, though it had been a pretty *hard* day, it was the *happiest* one of his whole life. He had struck a mine he had never dreamed of before, and had found that there was something better than money. "He that trusteth in his riches shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch. . . . He that watereth shall be watered also himself." Prov. xi, 28; 25.

Job was distinguished for unparalleled trials and

sufferings, from which, no doubt, he prayed much to be delivered, but without success, until he began to sympathize with others. For we are told, "the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he *prayed for his friends:* also the Lord gave Job *twice* as much as he had before." Job xlii, 10.

Doing good will have an important bearing, too, upon our *eternal* future. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever." Dan. xii, 3. "He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth *fruit* unto *life eternal:* that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together." John iv, 36. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have *right* to the *tree of life*, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Rev. xxii, 14.

It is pleasant, indeed, to meet those whom we have benefited here, and receive their grateful recognition and applause. How much better it will be to be greeted hereafter by those whom we have served and saved!

A beloved preacher, urging his people to duty from this consideration, said, "I do not think a person repenting on his death bed will have so high a place in heaven as the old pilgrim who has devoted the energies of a life-time to Christ. We would extend not as cordial a hand to the *rebel*, who, after fighting years against his government had grounded his arms only when all hope of success had fled, as we would to the *scarred veteran*, who had manfully stood between his country and its enemies, and sacrificed the comforts of home for the horrors of the battle-field that the cause of liberty and justice might be preserved."

"Heavenly joys will be proportional to the *capacities* and *gracious merits* of the recipients." Then

"Work, though the enemies' laughter
Over the valleys may sweep—
For God's patient workers hereafter
Shall laugh when the enemies weep.

"Work for the good that is nighest;
Dream not of greatness afar;
That glory is ever the highest
Which shines upon men as they are.

"Work though the world may defeat you;
Heed not its slander and scorn;
Nor weary till angels shall greet you
With smiles through the gates of the morn.

"Offer thy life on the altar;
In the high purpose be strong;
And if the tired spirit should falter,
Then sweeten the labor with song.

"What if the poor heart complaineth,
Soon shall its wailings be o'er;
For there, in the rest which remaineth,
It shall grieve and be weary no more!"

W. MORLEY PUNSHON.

A WORD TO THE READER.

If this book has profited you please recommend it to your friends. We may often benefit others more by calling attention to a right book than in any other way. Rev. Joseph Longking, author of many popular works, has kindly presented us with the following testimonial :—

"Having read the proofs of Dr. Porter's "WINNING WORKER," I take much pleasure in giving my testimony to its value. It is a clear, pointed, and impressive presentation of social and spiritual things. I think it might well be called the Science of Social and Religious Influence."

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